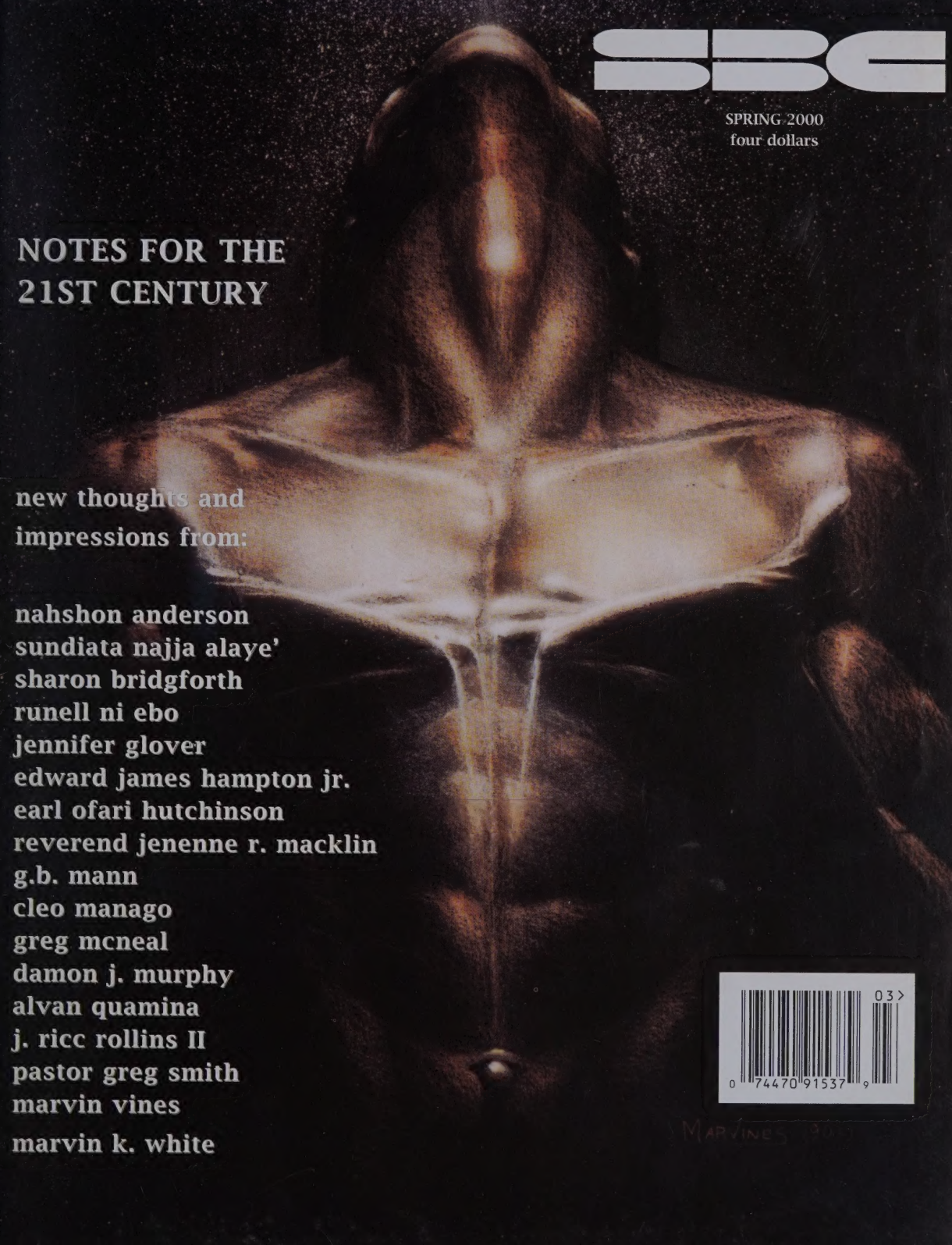

SBC

SPRING 2000
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NOTES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

new thoughts and impressions from:

nahshon anderson
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edward james hampton jr.
earl ofari hutchinson
reverend jenenne r. macklin
g.b. mann
cleo manago
greg mcneal
damon j. murphy
alvan quamina
j. ricc rollins II
pastor greg smith
marvin vines
marvin k. white

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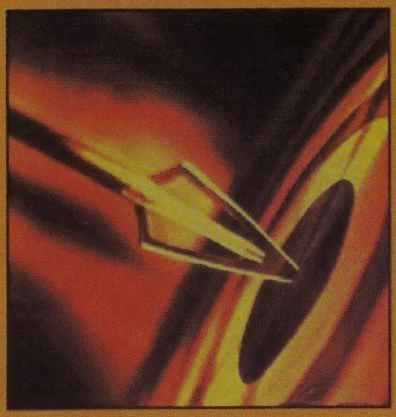
How do you get your facts about HIV treatment?

Do you get the runaround?



Or do you get to the point?

Navigating treatment options is serious business. Our skilled treatment advocates can help. If you want more information on the latest treatments for HIV, give us a call. It's good to know that you have someone on your side. We're the New Village AIDS Prevention Team, we're here for you.

(323) 964-7820

1247 South LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles

NEW VILLAGE
AIDS PREVENTION TEAM

Tuesdays at 7:45

BASICBLACK

A Rap for Black Men Who Love Black Men

Thursdays at 7:00

JAVA TALK

A Safe Space for Black Men Living With HIV

CoNTeNTS

SPRING 2000

SPECIAL EDITION

NOTES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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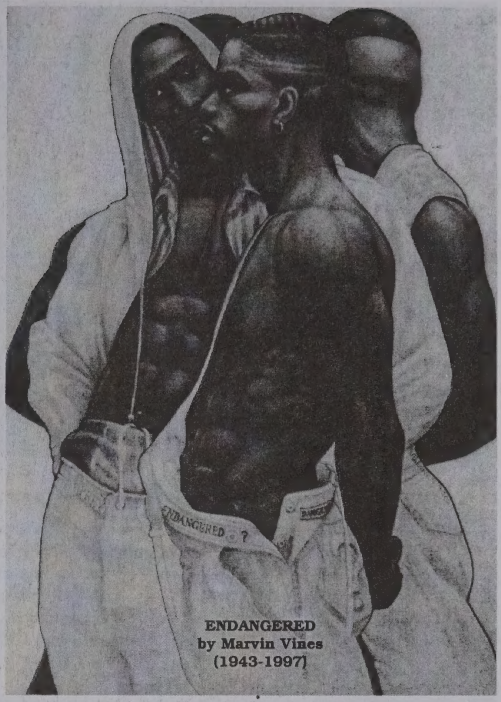
Los Angeles, California



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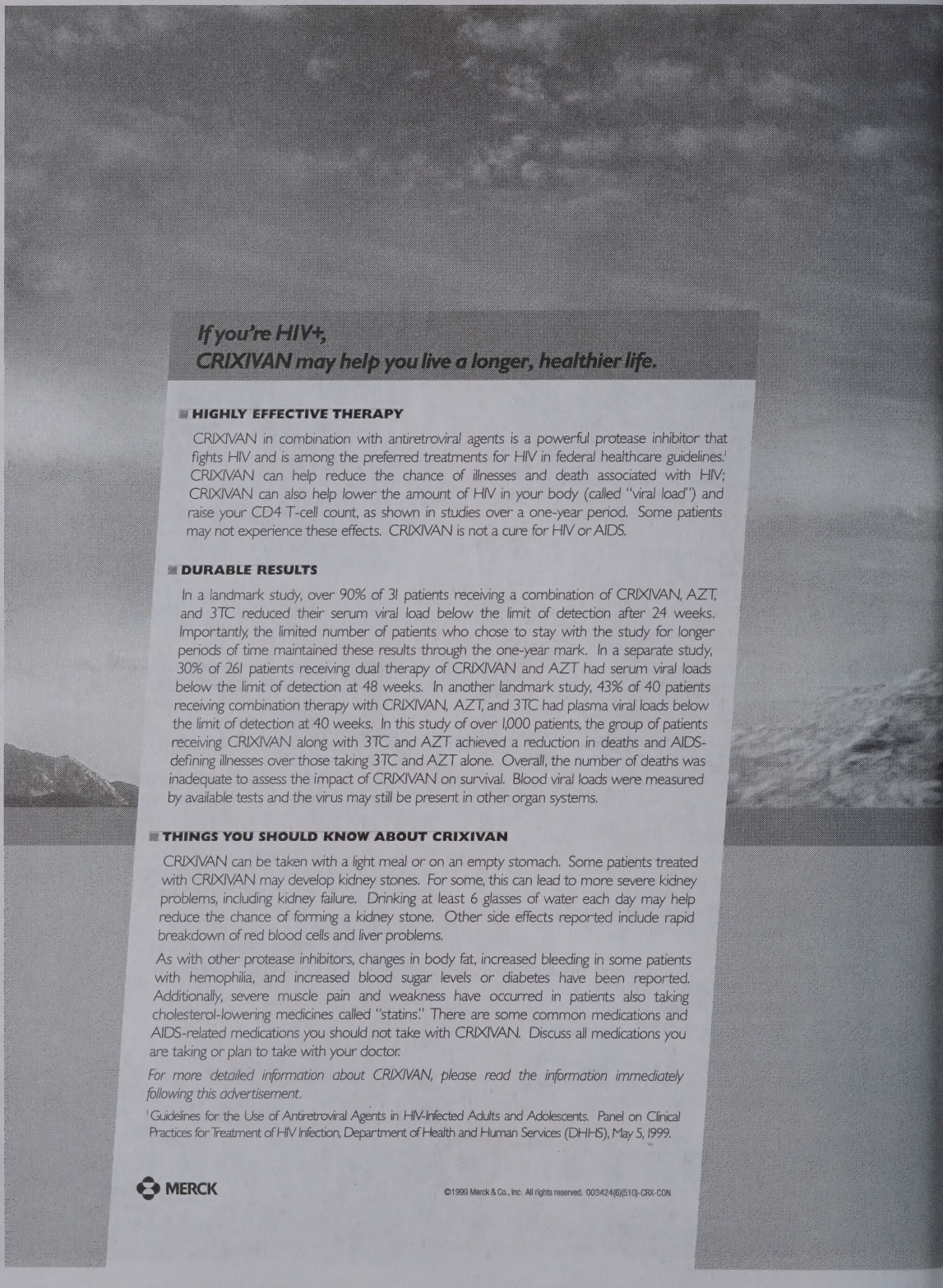

If you're HIV+, CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE THERAPY

CRIXIVAN in combination with antiretroviral agents is a powerful protease inhibitor that fights HIV and is among the preferred treatments for HIV in federal healthcare guidelines.[1] CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV; CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 T-cell count, as shown in studies over a one-year period. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

DURABLE RESULTS

In a landmark study, over 90% of 31 patients receiving a combination of CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks. Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one-year mark. In a separate study, 30% of 261 patients receiving dual therapy of CRIXIVAN and AZT had serum viral loads below the limit of detection at 48 weeks. In another landmark study, 43% of 40 patients receiving combination therapy with CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC had plasma viral loads below the limit of detection at 40 weeks. In this study of over 1,000 patients, the group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. Overall, the number of deaths was inadequate to assess the impact of CRIXIVAN on survival. Blood viral loads were measured by available tests and the virus may still be present in other organ systems.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CRIXIVAN

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems.

As with other protease inhibitors, changes in body fat, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia, and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Additionally, severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients also taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

For more detailed information about CRIXIVAN, please read the information immediately following this advertisement.

[1] Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), May 5, 1999.

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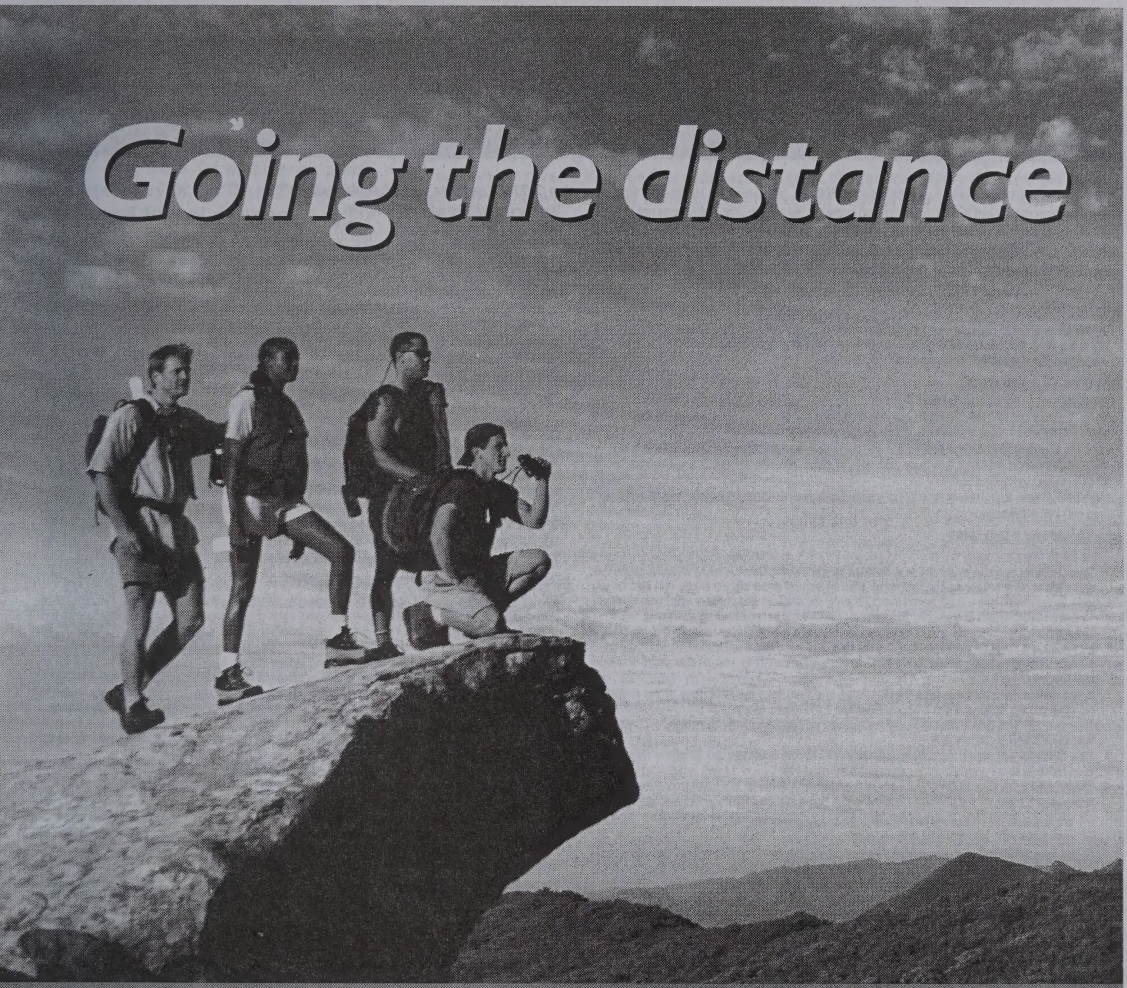
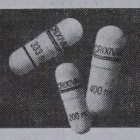


Remember to
ask your doctor
about CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

www.crixivan.com



CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

9024510

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays". If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:

   dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- High cholesterol and you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins".

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?**

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)	isoniazid (INH)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Methadone

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

RESCRIPTOR® (delavirdine) — If you take CRIXIVAN with RESCRIPTOR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SPORANOX® (itraconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SPORANOX®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SUSTIVA™, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors, including CRIXIVAN, together with some of the cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." Call your doctor if you develop severe muscle pain or weakness.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: allergic reactions; severe skin reactions; yellowing of the skin and/or eyes; heart problems including heart attack; abdominal swelling; indigestion; inflammation of the kidneys; inflammation of the pancreas; joint pain; depression; itching; hives; change in skin color; hair loss; ingrown toenails with or without infection; crystals in the urine; painful urination; and numbness of the mouth.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°- 86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This leaflet provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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Issued September 1999
MERCK & CO., INC.
West Point, PA 19486, USA

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

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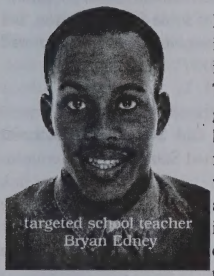
LeTTeRS

IN SUPPORT OF TEACHER BRYAN EDNEY

Thank you very much for printing the article about Bryan Edney in the December issue of SBC [Volume 8 Issue 6]. I just picked up the magazine today at the LA Gay and Lesbian Center, and I was extremely upset after reading the article ["Reporting Child Abuse Lands Homosexual Teacher In Jail"]. I know Bryan Edney, and had no idea this had happened to him. I know him from our attending the same church for a while. Many times, I was witness to his uplifting Spirit and God-given singing ability.


targeted school teacher Bryan Edney

I, too, believe in his innocence, but that is not the point. There's a much bigger issue going on here. A man was falsely imprisoned, when known and available evidence indicated that someone else was the perpetrator. His only crime was being gay and black. On top of that, his good reputation was slandered,and his vocation and income were cut off.

Unfortunately, in this year 2000, in this United States, this could have happened to any gay black man. Ignorance is rampant in many corners, and we must bring light and truth to these situations. Everyone, especially parents, should be appalled by what happened. The children were not being protected at all by those whose job it is to do so. I know that Bryan is a humble man, not an attention-seeker, but I hope that his story is sent to every news outlet in Long Beach [California], so its residents can know what kind of police force is operating there.

I hope his case is picked up by the national media, and that he gets free legal representation to sue those who have wronged him. In the meantime, I'm sending a donation and keeping him in my prayers. Please keep us updated on this story.

Kathy Fuller
Los Angeles, California

REGARDING LUCY FLORENCE AND THE HARRIS TWINS

After reading the article in the Sept/Oct 1999 issue [" Showdown at Lucy Florence: We're Black, We're Gay and We'll Not Go Away" SBC Volume 8 Issue 5] on Lucy Florence's problems with racism and homophobia, I decided to visit the coffee house last week with my Afro-Am girlfriend. She is new to LA and Long Beach where we now live, and was surprised to hear of overt racism in Hollywierd. Unfortunately, the place was closed and a new coffeehouse was taking its place. I wanted to help support the owners in that a few years ago, I had a cup of joe with my now ex-boyfriend; I found the owners, the Harrises, to be cordial and polite and likable gentlemen, and don't understand what stick is up this Elizabeth Reilly's alleged g-spot.

As for the problems with the landlords, it doesn't surprise me, considering that friends (both are gay and one is Latino, too) operated Lizards Coffee house in the early 90s and had problems, too. Considering the turnover in non-theatre businesses in that building, bad property management by the landlord must also be considered into the equation. I wish the Harris the best in their future ventures.

Thomas Provost
Long Beach California

GAY PENTACOSTALS MEET

Thank you for taking time to read my letter regarding the sensitive subject of spiritual reconciliation for gays & lesbians. My name is Robert Morgan and I pastor a church in Tampa Bay that seeks to be the open arms of Christ to all people, without distinction. Like most men who have a deep love for God but find themselves gay, I too have a dramatic story of searching & finding, loving & loosing, and accepting & winning.

Over the last few years, a movement has begun to grow among Christian gay people. Most churches that affirm gay people are very liberal in their theology. We are not.

In October of 2000, a conference of Spirit-filled, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Full Gospel gay people will assemble in Tampa Bay to celebrate the grace of God. It is that grace that helped us reconcile, the scripture and our sexuality. Secondly, we will celebrate one hundred years of Pentecostalism, as we know it today.

We are finding a ground swell of enthusiasm as more and more people find out that we exist and that there are so many of us. There are so many Pentecostal gay people who, because of the church's rejection, feel they have no other alternative than to pursue a lifestyle that often proves destructive. Those are the people we are trying to find and minister to.

My question is a simple one. With gay issues being so hot in the press, would you consider looking at what is happening among us particularly regarding to our conference coming up in October of 2000 in Tampa? No doubt, some of your readership will be surprised to learn of our existence and many that are on a very destructive course will be glad to learn of the hope we offer.

We have nothing to gain personally were you to grant our request. Only the great joy of finding others who are searching for what we have to share.

Robert Morgan
Tampa, Florida
[editor's note: contact Robert Morgan via e-mail at PoHoFellow@aol.com, via postal mail at 1200 E. McBerry St. Tampa, Florida 33603. The church phone number is 813-238-6330]

IS DATING OUTSIDE THE RACE A CULTURAL THING?

I came across your web site and thought I'd write and ask your readers for some help. I manage a gay dating service in Toronto (www.rainbowconnect.com) for men who are serious about a relationship. Most of our clientele are Caucasian, 15% are Oriental, 8% are South Asian and 4% are Black. Most of our non Caucasians tend to want to date only white men and not their own. The reasoning here eludes me. Is it just Toronto or is it like that in other major cities? One of my Black clients is a lovely young man from Jamaica (most of our Black members are from one of the islands) who only wants to date other masculine Black men BUT the rest of my Black clients do NOT want to date Black. This is making my job rather difficult in helping this young man. Is this a cultural thing, not wanting to date your own race? A few of our Chinese clients have expressed feelings of wanting to break away from dating within their culture because it is too close knit and everyone knows everyone else's business. Gossip about a being gay seems to reach "straight" Chinese ears when gay Chinese date each other. So I'm told but I'm not sure that this makes any sense. Anyway....I would appreciate any opinions or feedback especially from any Afro Canadians in the area.
Many thanks,

Len
connections@rainbowconnect.com
Toronto, Canada

We welcome your letters. When writing, please include your telephone number, which will not be printed, but is needed for verification. It is not our policy to print unverifiable, unsigned or anonymous letters. Some letters may be edited for space and/or clarity. Send letters to:
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1155 4th Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90019.
e-mail us at sbcmagazine@sprintmail.com

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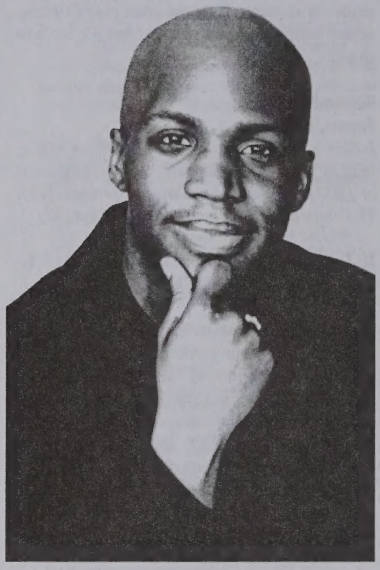
KICK MAGAZINE MERGES WITH SBC MAGAZINE



Curtis Lipscomb [pictured above] becomes new SBC Vice-President In Charge of Midwestern Operations

Detroit, Michigan---After five years of celebrating black, gay life, Detroit-based African-American magazine Kick has merged with the country's oldest Black homosexual periodical SBC.

Although negotiations remain confidential, it has been made known that Kick founder and publisher, Curtis Lipscomb, who will assume the title of Vice President of Midwestern Operations for SBC Magazine, establishing a regional office in Detroit, brings considerable Kick resources, including vital contacts, talent and contractors uniquely familiar with the vast Black lesbian and gay community in the Midwest, to the table. "In the spirit of a better industry, a unified company would only help the community," stated Lipscomb.

SBC Publishers, owner of SBC Magazine and SBC Press, will maintain its headquarters in Los Angeles, California under the direction of owner/founder Stanley Bennett Clay.

"Curtis and I go way back," stated Clay, "and we have often talked about a way to strengthen the Black homosexual press throughout the country. Kick has been a God-send in the Midwest due to Curtis' publishing expertise and familiarity with the region. SBC, coming out of L.A., has been on a mission for almost 9 years to strengthen it's national focus. That's one of the many great things Curtis and this merger have to offer."

Clay further states that distribution of SBC is currently limited to less than a thousand in the Detroit area, but plans are already underway to expand the numbers and make Detroit another major SBC distribution hub.

Although Kick Magazine merges with SBC, Kick Publishing Company will remain in operation under Lipscomb's direction with it's primary focus on Hotter Than July, Detroit's annual Black lesbian and gay celebration held in the latter part of July. Lipscomb's involvement with SBC Magazine will additionally be business administration oriented.

Details and contracts for the merger are expected to be completed by March 2000.

CIRCUMCISED MEN LESS LIKELY TO BE HIV +

by Terry Beswick

San Francisco, California---Not many guys want to have the foreskin surgically removed from their penis, at least if they are old enough to have anything to say about it. But some public health experts believe the procedure could save their lives.

A recent review of 32 studies from eight countries has revealed that men who are uncut (uncircumcised) are two to eight times more likely to be infected with the human immunodefiency virus (HIV), and in regions where circumcision is widespread, there appears to be a direct correlation with lower HIV infection rates.

Although the new report primarily surveys heterosexual men in developing countries, at least three large surveys of American men who have sex with men have reached nearly as alarming conclusions: gay and bisexual men with intact foreskins are at least twice as likely to be HIV-positive as men who are circumcised.

Biological and epidemiological evidence linking male circumcision with the virus that causes AIDS has been widely known among researchers for years. Yet policy-makers and educators have failed to direct adequate resources to inform people with the potentially life-saving information, according to the report entitled "Male Circumcision and HIV Infection: 10 Years and Counting," published in the December issue of the Lancet, a prestigious medical journal.

"The number of infections probably caused by lack of male circumcision already reaches into the millions," said the study's lead author, Daniel Halperin, Ph.D., an assistant adjunct professor of community health systems and medical anthropology at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF). "We would expect the international health community to at least consider some form of action, but male circumcision remains largely unexplored as a tool against AIDS."

Heterosexual HIV transmission is much more common in Africa and South and Southeast Asia than in the United States, and epidemiologist have observed a statistically significant link between infection rates and prevalence of male circumcision in these regions, which by far represent the greatest proportion of AIDS cases worldwide.

In West African countries, where circumcision in infancy is common, only 1 to 5 percent of the population is HIV-positive, while nearly a quarter of people in the predominately non-circumcising Eastern and Southern African nations are infected.

Scientist point to several factors that make men with uncut penises more prone to HIV infection.

"The foreskin is sort of an Achilles' heel that allows a man to be infected from a vagina or anus," Halperin stated. "It's fragile tissues---it can get torn during intercourse, and is also more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases." Additionally, there is a higher concentration in the penile foreskin of immune system cells known as Langerhans cells than is found in the cervix, vagina or rectum; Langerhans cells are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection.

Other researchers have previously reported that "tops"---homosexual and bisexual men who are exclusively the insertive anal sexual partner---are significantly less likely to be infected with HIV than there receptive "bottom" partner.

But Halperin reported that uncut tops are more likely to be infected through contact with their partner's rectal lining, and should consider themselves at greater risk---especially if a con-

dom is not always used.

"If I were a top, and I didn't like to use condoms, I would consider getting circumcised," Halperin said. "If that person is not going to use a condom, maybe we'd all be better off if that person was circumcised." Halperin strongly emphasized that circumcision should never be considered an alternative to using condoms.

Prevailing attitudes against adult circumcision, shared by the vast majority of males throughout the world, are often attributed to religious, cultural, or sexual beliefs.

For new parents in the United States and other Western countries, the anti-circumcision bias does not always extend to their infant boys. The federal Department of Health and Human Services has reported that in recent years, about 60 percent of babies with penises are circumcised annually.

Among many homosexual and bisexual men in the United States, uncut penises are a highly coveted delicacy, and uncut men of all sexual orientations will often claim heightened sexual gratification due to their foreskins. Halperin acknowledged that there likely will be little movement among adult men, especially homosexual and bisexual men, to have their foreskins surgically removed.

"There's a huge anti-circumcision movement, particularly in the [San Francisco] Bay Area. It's a politically charged issue," Halperin said.

Indeed, Bay Area educator targeting homosexual and bisexual men with safer sex information have not focused on circumcision as a means of HIV prevention.

Tim Teeter, a treatment support specialist with the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, also does not foresee a foreskin removal fad in the gay male community, despite the increased risk of HIV infection. "Most guys who are uncircumcised are really proud of the fact that they are uncircumcised," he told the Bay Area Reporter newspaper, "so it's not a simple matter to say 'just get circumcised'"

Teeter suggested that tops consider using condoms "a much less painful option."

COURT SAYS GIULIANI IS GUILTY OF PUNISHING HOUSING WORKS

New York, New York---City officials tried to make an AIDS service group ineligible for millions of dollars in federal money because it had been critical of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a judge has ruled.

In a recent ruling, U.S. District Judge Allen Schwartz found that city officials acted with "retaliatory intent" against Housing Works, a nonprofit group that operated two homes for homeless people with AIDS, mental illness and drug addiction.

Housing Works has been a relentless critic of Giuliani's policies on AIDS. It has Blocked rush hour traffic on bridges and tunnels, interrupted news conferences of city officials and conducted sit-ins in city offices.

Housing Works claimed the administration had initially given it a favorable rating, making it likely to qualify for grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The agency awards grants through a ranking system established by the city.

Housing Works said top city officials, angered by the group's stance against the mayor, downgraded it, effectively blocking $2.4 million to cover three years of operating expenses.

Schwartz issued an injunction ordering the city to restore the original rating. Schwartz also barred the city from punishing the group for "it's criticism of the Giuliani administration or its advocacy on behalf of persons with HIV or AIDS."

The decision came less than two weeks after a federal judge found Giuliani had violated the First Amendment by withholding payments to the Brooklyn Museum of Art over an exhibit the mayor deemed offensive.

SUPPORT FOR GAY AND LESBIAN EQUALITY ON THE RISE, NGLTF POLICY INSTITUTE STUDY SHOWS

70 Percent Support Right to Serve in the Military: Half of Republicans, 74 Percent of Democrats Back Anti-Discrimination Laws

Washington D.C.---The U.S. public overwhelmingly supports equal rights and anti-discrimination protections for lesbians and gay men, and this support increased markedly during the 1990s, according to a new report on trends in public opinion released by the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The Policy Institute of the NGLTF is a think-tank dedicated to research, policy analysis, strategy development and coalition building to advance the equality and understanding of GLBT people.

According to polling data from 1999, 70 percent of Americans support the right of gays and lesbians to serve in the military, up from 55 percent in 1992. Surprisingly, while all the Republican presidential candidates oppose anti-discrimination laws, half of Republican voters support such laws, as do 65 percent of Independents and 74 percent of Democrats.

"From Wrongs to Rights: Public Opinion on Gay and Lesbian Americans Moves Toward Equality 1973-1999," authored by Columbia University political scientist Alan Yang, reveals that American public opinion is more supportive of gays and lesbians than are most lawmakers and politicians. The report further reveals that this support for equal rights has grown despite a context of heightened anti-gay activism as well as increased organizing by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) activists to pass pro-GLBT civil rights and hate crime laws. The report tracks trends in public opinion as measured by questions and polls that ask the same question over time to national, random samples of the U.S. public.

"Presidential candidates opposing anti-discrimination protections are out of touch not only with the American electorate, but with the rank and file of their own party," said Urvashi Vaid, Director of the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "The overwhelming trend in American public opinion reveals that we have more allies than foes in our struggle for basic equal rights."

Over the past two decades the GLBT community has evolved into a valued and measurable political constituency, with 5 percent of the national electorate identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (GLB) in national exit polls taken during the 1996 presidential election, and 4.2 percent identifying as GLB in the national exit polls taken during the mid-term election of 1998. Public opinion polls do not yet provide data on public attitudes towards bisexuals and transgender people, and national exit polls have asked voters to self-identify as "gay, lesbian or bisexual."

To date, 235 cities and counties and 28 states have enacted have enacted either civil rights

laws or hate crimes laws that include GLBT people. Yet there are no federal laws outlawing discrimination based upon sexual orientation in employment or other categories.

"From Wrongs to Rights 1973-1999" documents increased support for gay and lesbian equality in several areas:

****Today, 83 percent support equal rights in employment and 75 percent support equal rights in housing.

****In 1996, 68 percent of women and 72 percent of African-Americans supported anti-discrimination laws for gay men and lesbians. Data reveal that women are consistently more supportive of anti-discrimination laws than men (an average of 65 percent of women supported anti-discrimination laws in four surveys from 1988 to 1996, versus 55 percent of men), and African-Americans are consistently more supportive of equal employment rights than white Americans (an average of 68 percent of blacks vs. 60 percent of whites in four surveys from 1988 to 1996).

****In 1998, 55 percent of those surveyed reported having a gay friend or acquaintance, up from 43 percent in 1994 and 24 percent in 1983. Such data correlates with increasing support for GLBT rights, supporting the conclusion that greater knowledge of openly gay or lesbian people fosters greater tolerance and support for equal rights laws.

****As familiarity with openly gay and lesbian people has increased, disapproval of same-sex relations has consistently declined since the early 1990s. Gallup reports a drop in disapproval from 57 percent in 1992 to 46 percent in 1999. The National Opinion Research Center tracks a decline in disapproval from 73 percent in 1990 to 58 percent in 1998.

****61 percent of Americans supported the hiring of gay and lesbian high school teachers in 1999, up from 27 percent in 1977. In 1997, 63 percent said school boards shouldn't be able to fire a teacher because he or she is gay.

****75 percent support the hiring of gay and lesbian doctors in 1999, up from 53 percent in 1992 and 44 percent in 1977.

****57 percent of self-described conservatives supported the right of gays and lesbians to serve in the military, as did 70 percent of moderates and 91 percent of liberals, according to a 1996 National Election Study. In 1999 70 percent of all respondents told Gallup that they supported gays and lesbians serving in the armed forces, up from 55 percent in a National Election Study poll in 1992. This sharp increase in support occurred against the backdrop of increased purges of homosexual service members since the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was adopted in 1993. Discharges for homosexuality increased 86 percent from 1993 to 1998, according to the Service members Legal Defense Network.

****Solid majorities support Social Security benefits for the same-sex partners of gay and lesbian people, as well as inheritance rights for same-sex spouses.

The Yang study also documents lower levels of support for the rights of gay and lesbian couples to marry and adopt children. Less than one-third of respondents support the right to civil marriage for same-sex couples, according to two 1998 polls (29 percent and 33 percent). And only 36 percent support the right of same-sex couples to adopt children. Put into context, Vaid noted, these results are not that surprising. "Same-sex marriage and same-sex couples adopting children are issues new to the public's consciousness, just as openly gay people teaching or being doctors were new concepts 20 years ago. Over time, there is every reason to believe that this trend will change and that support for gay adoptive parents and for the rights of same-sex couples will continue to increase."

Vaid cited the fact that same-sex unions are allowed by several European countries as a sign that governments internationally are changing their policies. "The marriage issue is one that will be with us [for many years to come] and one that is of critical importance to many GLBT people," Vaid said. "We believe that public opinion will change as the debate continues."

WINDY CITY TIMES ANNOUNCES NEW MINORITY STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Chicago, Illinois---Looking to a future when more minority and new immigrant students will be entering Chicago-area colleges and universities, Windy City Times announces the formation of a journalism scholarship program designed to benefit GLBT minority students in pursuit of media careers.

All applicants must be pursuing a journalism degree on an undergraduate or graduate level in the Chicago metropolitan area. Two scholarships will be given annually, with the recipients announced in May for the Fall 2000 term. Applications must be received by Windy City Times no later than April 1, 2000 to qualify. Each award will be in the amount of $1500.

In announcing the new program, Publisher Jeffrey E. McCourt said, "The face of journalism is forever changing. Today, the gay and lesbian press is reaching a wider, more diverse audience. Therefore, our newspapers and media outlets must take the necessary steps to ensure that everyone with talent and interest can be a part of this dynamic profession. To date, not enough has been done to foster interest in potential young writers, particularly minorities. Hopefully, this program will be a small step in the right direction by offering economic incentives to young people with talent and economic need. Publishing must continually move forward and it must do so with more diverse voices."

The Windy City Times Scholarships will be given by members of the newspaper's editorial department, as well as selected local journalists. Applicants for the Fall 2000 scholarship should send a short introductory essay (no longer than 1000 words), up to four examples of their work, a transcript and a resume to WCT-Scholarships, 325 West Huron, Suite 510, Chicago IL 60610. All applicants should also include complete contact information. Scholarship recipients will be announced in mid-May.

LGBTQ MUSLIMS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL GATHERING IN 2000

New York, New York---The Al-Fatiha Foundation, an international organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and their friends, announced today its plans for an international gathering to be held in London, England, in May of 2000.

Following meetings held between Al-Fatiha representatives and local LGBTQ Muslims, community members in London agreed to host

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Al-Fatiha's Second International Retreat. The Second International Retreat for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning Muslims and their Friends is tentatively planned to be held from May 26 – 29, 2000.

In announcing the retreat, Faisal Alam, the Founder & Director of the Al-Fatiha Foundation said that, "this international gathering will bring together Muslims from around the world who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) in a safe and spiritual environment, where they can discuss issues important to the community."

The Second International Retreat for LGBTQ Muslims & Friends will be the first time that Al-Fatiha has sponsored an event outside of the United States and Canada.

"Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning Muslims abandon Islam because they cannot reconcile their religion with their sexual orientation or gender identity. We hope that by meeting other LGBTQ Muslims and by sharing individual experiences, people can begin to understand that these two important identities are not exclusive to one another." said Faisal Alam.

The Al-Fatiha Foundation also announced that UNISON, the United Kingdom's largest trade union for the public sector, passed a resolution endorsing Al-Fatiha and its upcoming retreat in London. The resolution was submitted by the National Black Lesbian and Gay Members Caucus and passed by UNISON's National Lesbian and Gay Conference to support Al-Fatiha and its activities.

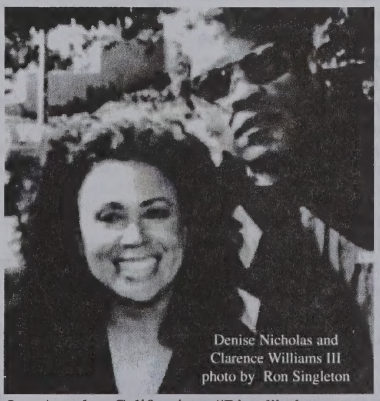
"This endorsement is historic for our community, because it recognizes the importance of our work and the struggle that lays ahead," said Faisal Alam. UNISON will work with the Al-Fatiha Foundation in providing logistical and technical support in organizing the retreat.

The Al-Fatiha Foundation was formed in October of 1998 at the First International Retreat for LGBTQ Muslims & Friends, held in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. More than thirty participants gathered from four countries representing thirteen nationalities and ethnicities. In May of 1999, the Al-Fatiha Foundation held its First North American Conference in New York City, New York, USA. More than sixty participants came together and participated in fifteen workshops and five plenary sessions. Workshop and plenary session topics included: HIV/AIDS in the Muslim community; Coming Out to Muslim families; Human Rights and LGBTQ Muslims; The Quran and Homosexuality; and Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues and Islam.

Since Al-Fatiha's formation more than six cities across North America have held social events, including Atlanta, Boston, New York, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and Washington DC. A group of local community members has been formed to organize the logistics of the retreat in London. Meetings will be held in the coming months and details of the retreat will be announced. For more information , please go to: http://www.al-fatiha.org/mlists.html or http://www.egroups.com/list/al-fatiha-news.

For more information about the Al-Fatiha Foundation, contact them at 212.752.3188, or write them at 405 Park Avenue Suite 1500/ New York, New York 10022. Their email address is: gaymulsims@yahoo.com and the website address is: http://www.al-fatiha.org

SBC'S FEATURE FILM 'RITUAL' SCREENS AT PAN AFRICAN FILM FEST



Denise Nicholas and Clarence Williams III photo by Ron Singleton

Los Angeles, California--- "Ritual", the controversial film written and directed by Stanley Bennett Clay, based on his award-winning stage play, will screen at the 8th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival Saturday, February 19th at 9 PM and Monday, February 21st at 8:20 PM.

"Ritual", which stars Clarence Williams III and Denise Nicholas, is the story of a wealthy African American attorney living in Malibu who seems oblivious to his wife's growing alcoholism, prompted by a conniving daughter who seeks to usurp her mother's position in the kitchen and in the bedroom. Because of this, the brilliant homosexual son, drops out of his Ivy League college and comes home to save his family in a most shocking way.

This year's festival, hosted by CCH Pounder, will run from February 10th through the 21st, and will feature an array of films from the African diaspora, featuring such actors as Courtney B. Vance, Regina King, Ed Asner, Kathleen Turner, Omar Epps, Alfre Woodard, Debbi Morgan and Forest Whitaker, to name a few.

All screenings will be held at the Magic Johnson Theatres in Los Angeles, 3650 Martin Luther King Jr. Bl. in the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza. Tickets for regular screenings are $4.95 (matinees, seniors and children) and $7.75 (adults).

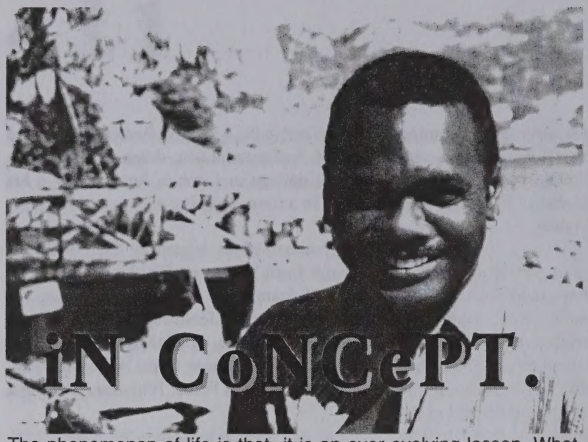
For more information and festival itinerary call 213.896.8221 or 323.295.1706. For online information check www.PAFF.org.

INDEPENDENCE 2000: CHICAGO PLANS 2ND ANNUAL BLACK PRIDE CELEBRATION FOR JUNE 29 - JULY 3, 2000

Chicago, Illinois---Chicago will host it's second annual Black Pride Festival, "Independence 2000", over the 4th of July weekend, June 29 through July 3. This weekend is an annual gathering celebrating the Black Lesbian, Gay, Bi-affectionate and Transgender community in the Windy City. Independence '99 was enjoyed by several thousand brothas and sistas and was a vast success. The theme for the 2000 event is "An Explosion of Heritage". Independence 2000 will feature activities for the entire Black LesBiGayTrans community including live performances, cultural events, seminars and a lakefront festival. Evening activities will include parties hosted by various social organizations and bars/clubs from the community.

The official host hotel is the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, 2233 S. Martin Luther King Drive (downtown Chicago). Reservations can be made at 312.567.1234 or Toll Free at 800.233.1234. Ask for the Chocolate City/The Rails/Chicago Black Pride rate. The official Chicago Black Pride Committee Information desk will be located at the hotel on the 2nd floor

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 44]



iN CoNCePT.

The phenomenon of life is that it is an ever evolving lesson. What we bring from the last century, shall serve us well in the new one. The problems of the past urge forth solutions, while yesterday's pleasures are worth repeating and improving and expanding upon.

Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our infant past, before we knew peer pressure and prejudice and societal pain. Before the first time someone called us faggot, sissy, dyke, nigger, wetback, honky, chink, fatso, bitch. When we believed the world shared our innocence and newborn goodness. Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our present, and our presence. Knowing that we exist by the grace of A Greater Power all around us and deep inside us, and that we are the marvelous manifestation of That Greater Power and that each moment is a gift from That Greater Power, a gift meant to be shared. Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our future. Improvement lies ahead. Betterment lies ahead. Deeper love, through deeper understanding, lies ahead. The future, by nature, is always bright.

And so, for us here at SBC, it is only fitting that our first issue of the 21st century should be filled with the words, visual expressions, opinions and counsel of a diverse group of Africentric homosexual men and women, their gifts, their Notes for the 21st Century, if you will, their helpful lessons from their past, meditations on their present, admonitions for the future, shared freely, lovingly. Drum beats sent forth, calls awaiting response.

The Notes for the 21st Century contained within these pages are just that. Notes. And the note taking will never stop. Even when the time comes for us to make that transition to a higher or lower or different ground, our lives on earth shall be noted in the lesson plans of others to follow. Our triumphs and our mistakes will teach and educate long after we are gone. Our words and our pictures, from the most humble of us to the most visible of us, must continue to speak of, by and for us.

It is a marvelous purpose we have. Each life is a lesson for all lives to come.

Stanley Bennett Clay

SBC

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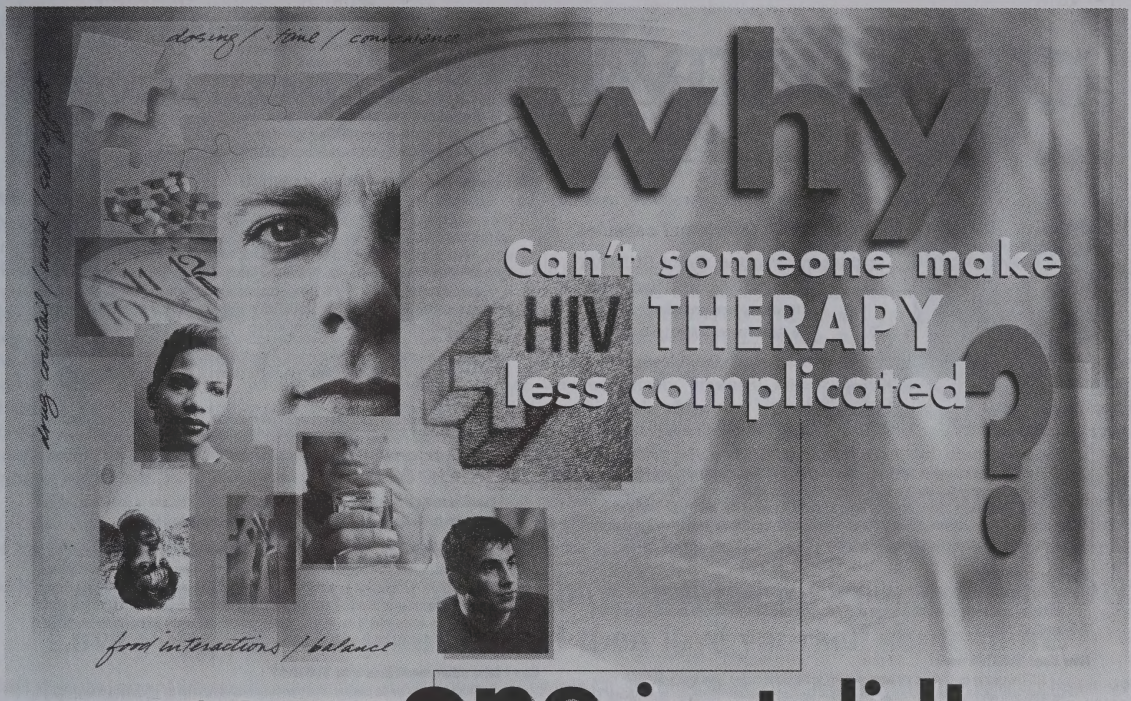

someone just did!

Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ is the first HIV drug approved to be taken once-a-day as part of your combination therapy. Just take three 200 mg capsules together once daily, with or without food; high fat meals should be avoided. Your doctor may suggest taking SUSTIVA at bedtime to reduce any side effects you may experience.

SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

Now listed among preferred anti-HIV drugs in government guidelines.[1]

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

For more information on SUSTIVA, call 1-800-4PHARMA or visit our website at http://www.sustiva.com
For more information on the updated DHHS Guidelines, a PDF file of the guidelines is available at http://www.hivatis.org

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

FOR HIV

Finally, a once daily medication to treat HIV.

SUSTIVA. It's about time.

www.sustiva.com

1. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), December 1998.

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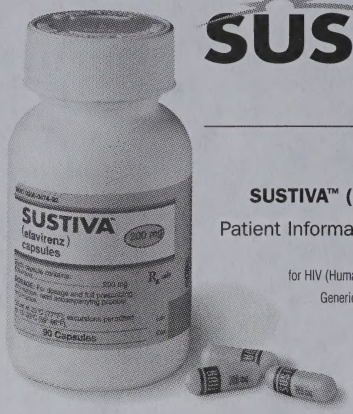
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz



SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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DuPont Pharmaceuticals
Wilmington, DE 19880
Issued September, 1998

A NOTE TO MYSELF, MY BROTHAS & MY SISTAHS

by J. Ricc Rollins II
TAMPA. FLORIDA

When I received this invitation to share my thoughts on this new century from the publishers of SBC, I was both honored and humbled. Humbled, because a year ago, when I embarked upon this journey, I had no idea of its destination, if any at all. Along the way I had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people. People who shared in the vision that was conceived when I decided to publish Like Breathing. People who(m) I now proudly and fondly call my friends. I now understand the meaning of the saying "...I wouldn't take anything for my journey."

And indeed it is an honor and privilege, because of the prestigious and note worthy company that I share the pages of this month's issue with. Dually honored, because someone actually wanted to me share a few of my thoughts.

As I speak around the country I find myself sharing the importance of truth especially to oneself and to those whom we deem important in our lives. As an ordained minister, I depend on scripture and other inspirational text for strength and motivation on the journey. One scripture that many of you have heard me share is John 8:32"... and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set/make you free." And I think I speak for everyone reading when I say "free is the way to be,"especially if you want to be happy. Now I'm not saying to you that you have to come out to your family, friends, co-workers or fellow parishioners, but I will tell you that there is a certain unimaginable freedom in living in your truth. And might I add that if you're not "out" to anyone else, I would hope that you're out to yourself. I think that Ralph Ellison said it best, "...when I discover who I am I'll be free." There is something so liberating in knowing who you are, not who you think you are or who others perceive you to be, but the real deal, the you that is true, the.... well you get the drift. There is nothing sadder than someone shopping for condos in Cleopatra's neighborhood, you know it-D'nile. No one else need know your business, but you owe it to yourself to mind your own business as you are your own business. And no one can run it like you. You know the quirks, the nuances and the short comings. And you know what needs to be worked on.

So what will you do in the new century that you didn't do in the last? Some of us will make promises that we won't keep, resolve to do this or that and that's about as far as we will get. How about not making any resolutions or promises? Rather, why not simply breathe. Yeah, breathe! Let the chips fall where they may and be a better you everyday. Take time to appreciate you and love you, before you enter into anyone else's space. If you aren't happy with you, then how can you be happy with anyone else? Please don't tell me that you've been looking to others to do that for you. Baby, that's the problem. It ain't gonna happen. Nope, never will. No one can fill the void that you have created for yourself but YOU! Love yourself, like yourself and then love yourself some more.

"No one can fill the void that you have created for yourself but YOU! Love yourself, like yourself and then love yourself some more."

Recently, I had the privilege of speaking at a retreat sponsored by Brothers United, Tennessee Network. I shared with the brothers in both my workshop on Friday evening and my sermon on Sunday two key point. One that every breath is precious and secondly that it's time that we start packing light. As we enter this new century, we can't travel the journey the same way we did in the last. It's time to run this race with the determination that you're in it to win it! We can't let the oppression of a homophobic black community and oft times a racist white gay community hold us back. We have to forge ahead letting nothing get in our way. I would love to believe that we have made major strides in our communities, but let the record speak for itself. The record clearly states that there is much work to be done. But by who and what for?

I'm glad you asked. We owe it to those who have come before us to keep their work and vision alive. No more blaming "the man" nor our dysfunctional families, but let's start with us. Yep, you and me. President Kennedy once stated, "...ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country..." When was the last time you asked and did you respond to the answer with a willing attitude or was your heart and soul bursting with apathy? We have no one to blame for where we are but ourselves. Can you honestly say that you (or I) have really made a conscious effort to assist in the tearing down of racial and social barriers. Really and truly? Honestly? If you have, I salute you my brotha or sistah! If not, then rather than scold you (us) I would rather encourage you (us) to begin making little differences that will eventually lead to big changes. In ourselves, in our cities and towns, our country and, yes, even in our world.

At this writing, the clock ticks away and we are one millisecond closer to the dawning of a new day, I close this note by sharing my formula for "breathing". After all, breathing begins with a single breath:

Be true to yourself, by being faithful to your true self...
Respect yourself and remind yourself why you deserve that respect...
Expect nothing from others that you don't expect from yourself...
Acknowledge the you that is, anticipating the you that is yet to be...
Take time for you, treating yourself the way you want to be treated...
Honor your greater self by giving honor, thanks and praise to the Creator of your greater self.

As we embark upon this new decade in this new century, let these not be the only things new to our lives. How about a new attitude, a new outlook , a new sense of community awareness and a new hope that tomorrow will be better because each of us are doing our part to make this world a better place not only for ourselves but others who reside on the planet with us.

And lastly, a renewed Spirit . Baby, breathe and be! Loving the you that is and the you that is yet to be!

J. Ricc Rollins II is the author of two novels, **Like Breathing** and **Breathe Again.** Along with his life partner, Lorenzo Robertson, he is the owner of the Tampa, Florida-based publishing house **Ishai Books.**

bull-jean
&
one badd case of the peacocks

by sharon bridgforth
austin, texas

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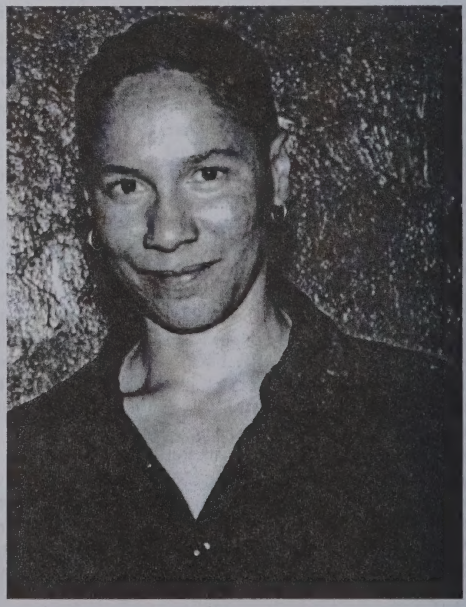
na/see what had happened was
we was over to binky cousin maymay's house making groceries for binky granny
till we had to go by olesirus
    that's maymay's ex you know
and maymay found olesirus laid up with some wo'mn
    which meant maymay couldn't just get what she come for/she had to
    handle a few things first
and what had happened was
me and bull-jean was sitting on olesirus porch/waiting for maymay
when next thing we know
the neighbor woman
just come up and jsit on po bull-jean's lap
till binky granny's great granbaby/sticka
run up panting
my gran-mawmaw want she groceries
my gran-mawmaw want she groceries!
and maymay come/out see the neighbor woman sitting on bull-jean's lap/start to yelling
you low-down cheating dog
don't
you
think
for
one minute i ain't fixnta tell it/you
mangy
thing
you
sticka still panting/maymay carrying on and on
till they both spin off
and direct to tell it.

na/see
but the truth is
the whole time the neighbor woman was winking at me/cause it were
my lap
she was really trying to get on

and/that
is what
really
had happened.

that's milo buford
who we all know is a fool what i can't figure out is
why
bull-jean is running with her
and worsa
why she letn her speak/at this very sensitive moment.



Sharon Bridgforth photo
by Pat Hendricks

course/na i thought bull-jean had long retired her fool ways
parently
not.

i am sorry.
for the times i did not notice your feelings.
the feelings i didn't admit i had.
for the arguments i could have avoided by looking at my actions
instead of yours.
for the many ways that i have been selfish and insensitive i am sorry.
for the flowers i walked past and did not pick for you
for the times i have neglected to give you a simple smile i am sorry/that your heart has
been broken from loving me/that you had to wonder if i'd ever love you as completely
as you love me for all the times i have wasted time when i could have been loving you
better i am sorry/please
forgive me give me another chance
baby!

ole bull-jean/trying to get let back in.
yessuh/cause
bull-jean and mina
got what you calls a badd case of the peacocks.
course/na the peacocks is when you with somebody you love dearly/and
you be so beautiful you wear your feathers fanning all the time
and things is good and you is glorious and life is fine

till
you can't hold them feathers up no mo
and they gets to dropping one by one
till
the only thing fanning be that funky bare ass
yessuh
and with all that ole nasty dirty shit showing
ain't no way to be pretty
no mo.

yessuh
bull-jean had done dropped all she feathers.

sun go down
chill come in
lights go off
bull-jean/still on the porch
look
so
sad

then i hear mina say
you can stay out there if you want to but ain't nobody said you can't come in the house.

i try to warn bull-jean
that ain't no friendly invite
but she
quick
in the house.
mina
for a long time
silent.
then say
  umph

mina stare/looking
watch bull-jean till bull-jean reach for a kiss
mina/watching bull-jean
say

i know you didn't kiss that woman or hold her close .
and i know you didn't invite her on your lap

but you might as well have

cause bout time you finish acting like you don't know what's going on
and time you finish playing like milo the bad one/and you just hanging around
and time you finish
not noticing
what your own head is thinking/next time

the bitch gone just stick her pussy in your face

and then it's gone be too late

bull-jean sit still/frozen
like if she quiet enough she be invisible till it all pass
mina say
you say all them pretty things
and you make all them precious promises
but you ain't got a clue about how to make your fancy talk walk real with me

the truth is/you don't want to cause
you got a place in your mind where you keeps a bag packed
which mean
part of you has always been ready to leave
which mean
i can't plan a life-time with you/cause you ain't never completely here.

so today
all what you have said to me before
don't
mean
nothing

ooh/them last words twist bull-jean up real bad
but mina ain't done/say
if you want

you can take your dog
and your sack of clothes
and go on back to that empty house that you moved here from

cause i be damn
if i'ma
waste
my
life
fighting for somebody that ain't decided that she want to be with me.

course/na
bull-jean just miserable
she try to think through it all
but you know how slow she be when she have to think and feel at the same time.
yessuh/she done got caught in she have mind she have mind to liking little
attentions from the wy'mns/she have mind to keep one foot out the door/she have mind to
let mina do all the thinking and feeling/cause she have mind to keep thinking of nothing
but her own have mind
which is laid with traps.
course/na i tell her
gal you in the soon come and your wo'mn in the what was
you best get with the right now for you find yourself a usetabe.

bull-jean finally recover/tell mina
i know that i have not been completely honest with myself

which means i have not been fair to you

but you know that i would never want to be without you

so i am asking
please
lets talk this thing through

mina say
umph

hold on to she silence
so bull-jean press on
say
on this day

with God as my witness
and sweet Angels as judge
i Pray...

i will work on keeping myself Healed and moving forward
day by day
moment by moment
i will unhook myself from fear.
without blaming you for the things i cannot do or feel/i will walk with you
through the good times/the hard times and times unknown.
at the start and end of each day and i will examine my Heart/so that i can offer it to
you/a gift a flower without thorns.

i Pray/i give you
all that i have:
dedication
support
tender actions
devotion
desire
and exclusivity.
to you
i open my arms
i give you my heart
in Truth
i Pray/now and forever
grow in eternity with me
keep on walking real with me
Love.

i asked you to be my wo'mn a long time ago
i am now asking you to stay with me while i open myself to being/completely your wo'mn too.

well mina must be from showme cause she let the ole dog back in/but she keep that ass on a short leash for some time
parently
mina need to see how long bull-jean can act as pretty as she talk.

course/na
that was one badd case of the peacocks
but at least bull-jean done
patched back on a few of she feathers

yessuh.

Sharon Bridgforth

is the author of **the bull-jean stories;** performance stories published by RedBone Press (also available on cd). **the bull-jean stories** received the 1998 Lambda Literary Award for best book by a small press. Bridgforth's work has been presented at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, MN., The Theatre Offensive Out on The Edge Festival in Boston, MA., LaPena in Berkeley, CA., The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and many other venues around the country. Bridgforth is a National Endowment For The Arts/Theatre Communications Group, Playwright in Resident at Frontera @ Hyde Park Theatre (in Austin, Texas) for 1999/2000.

You can catch Bridgforth's work in various anthologies including: **Does Your Mama Know?**, RedBone Press; **ReCREATIONS: Religion and Spirituality in the Lives of Queer People**, Q Press; **KenteCloth**, North Texas University Press 1997 ed.; **MA-KA:Diasporic Juks**, Sister Vision Press; and **Sinister Wisdom 58**.

States Ms. Bridgforth: "I selected the following piece for SBC Magazine's Notes for the 21st Century because it is my Prayer that we as Black same gender-loving/LesBiGayTrans people move into the new millenium celebrating the ways we love each other/intentionally defining how we walk committed in sacred partnerships/challenging what we call Truth..."

AN OPEN CALL TO THE COMMUNITY:
RESTRUCTURING THE NATIONAL BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Alvan Quamina
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

I am happy to announce to you that I have been hired by the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum [NBLGLF] to serve as Executive Director. Because of the Leadership Forum's financial problems, this is currently a volunteer position. I am currently working part-time as the Coordinator for the Alameda County African American AIDS State of Emergency Task Force, which is seeking to respond successfully to a dire state of emergency in the City of Oakland and County of Alameda with respect to AIDS in our local African American community. I am also working part-time as an independent consultant seeking to provide fundraising and other capacity building services to African American nonprofit organizations. Setting all of this up, keeping my relationship intact, and keeping food on my table is keeping me very, very busy.

While the immediate problems of the relationship between staff at the Leadership Forum's AIDS Prevention Team in Los Angeles and the rest of the corporate structure have come to a mutually satisfying conclusion, a large number of immediate and longer term problems continue to assail the entire Leadership Forum, including our AIDS Prevention Team.

Most tangibly, the organization is in debt to the tune of approximately $50,000, we have not completed an organizational audit in over three years, our corporate filings are delinquent, and our accounting and accountability systems are in complete disarray. Other than its AIDS programmatic staff, funded by the City and County of Los Angeles, the Leadership Forum has no paid staff, no physical office of our own, and, as of this writing, no dedicated telephone line. I will need your support in raising funds to defray the debt of the Leadership Forum.

Less tangibly, but more importantly, Leadership Forum memberships have dwindled, and we appear to have lost the confidence and support of the community that we purport to serve. As a result, our credibility and even our relevance is in question. This is a much more difficult but much more critical area than the technical difficulties I have mentioned. I desperately need your assistance in redressing this problem area. I need your help, and the Leadership Forum needs your help. First, I invite you to become a Year 2000 member. I ask that you join at the highest support level that your personal and/or organizational budget will allow. Secondly, I would ask that you invite at least ten friends to become Year 2000 members, and that you ask them to invite an additional five friends of theirs to join as well. If you are successful, you will have raised a minimum of $1500 for the Leadership Forum, and you will have both my personal gratitude, and the organizational gratitude of the Leadership Forum.

There are other ways in which you can support as well. The Leadership Forum plans on holding its Year 2000 conference February 17 - 20, 2000 in Chicago, Illinois. That "Healing & Rebuilding" conference will be used as an opportunity for strategic planning. The conference represents the first opportunity for me to get input from our community as a community, about the past transgressions of the Leadership Forum, and the direction the community would like us to take, moving forward.

But that endeavor cannot succeed unless the community is able to, and in fact does, come out to the conference. I need your help in encouraging the community to attend this conference. I need your help in mobilizing our organizations and our community in your area to ensure that folks have the support they need to be able to attend the conference. I have secured the consent of the Board to drop the conference fees to $100 for advance registration, and $125 for on-site registration.

I do have some ideas that I bring to the table, but let me say at the outset that my commitment to the community that I am seeking to serve is that for as long as I am allowed to serve as Executive Director of the Leadership Forum, the agenda and structure of the Leadership Forum will be dictated by the membership of the Leadership Forum, and by the community of black lesbians and gays that we seek to serve. Thus my ideas provide merely the opinion of one member of the NBLGLF, and a springboard for the development of possibilities by each member of the Leadership Forum. Our direction and structure will be decided by the membership of the organization.

And in that vein, I am also committed, and am seeking your assistance in ensuring, that the membership of the Leadership Forum (and the ability to have input in the direction and ongoing decision-making of the Leadership Forum) is socio-economically and culturally diverse and truly representative of black lesbians and gays in this nation. This presents problems of recruitment and funding of economically disadvantaged members, as well as the challenge of developing mechanisms for ongoing membership input that do not limit participation to those who are able to attend national meetings or who have access to Internet and/or fax technology. And that input process must be developed utilizing sufficiently engaging and enjoyable mechanisms for input, that folks are not "bored out" of the process.

If we are to be truly representative and credible, I believe that we need a roster of at least five thousand members, and would prefer to see a membership roster of ten thousand members by year-end 2000. I need your immediate assistance in enrolling new members to meet that goal.

Again, I want to underscore that the vision being offered here is merely the vision of one member, but here is what my personal vision for the Leadership Forum is:

I see us serving as the primary facilitator of national networking and mobilization of black lesbians and gays. I see the Leadership Forum serving as our representative in National Discourse on matters of concern to black lesbians and gays. I see the Forum serving as an advocacy organization to see that national issues of concern to our community are developed, decided and resolved in our favor. And ultimately, I see the Leadership Forum developing an active and effective public policy program that sponsors and supports the development and passage of legislation supportive of us and our issues, and that opposes, and mobilizes the community for the defeat of legislation that would be to our detriment.

I believe that we should identify initial "subject areas" within which we will enter the national discourse. I would suggest the following areas:

Spirituality: Providing a witness of the ways in which our spirituality has sustained us as a community, and as individuals. That witness should not be limited merely to the Judeo/Christian/Islamic family of spiritual tradition, but should extend to all the ways in which we have, and do, express our spirituality as individual black lesbians and gays, celebrating the ways in which our connection with the Deity of our understanding has sustained us as we have navigated life as black people and as lesbians and gays. Taking a stand against the spiritual oppression that has destroyed many of our sistahs and brothas, and that continues to diminish the quality of life for many of us. Proclaiming that connection to Deity is available to those of us that seek such connection, and affirming our rightness to participate in the religious expressions, structures and organizations of our choice, and our right to be free from discrimination and oppression therein.

Youth and Education First: This area must be Youth defined, rather than defined by those of us that can no longer lay credible claim to youth. My personal suggestions to our black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youth membership would be to direct their attention toward the need for resources to establish and maintain "safe space" social, recreational, and social services facilities specifically for them. I would also suggest that some program be developed and implemented for the mentoring of our youth in the context of leadership development (and not just in the area of lesbian and gay issues).

Health: Providing focus on Womyn's Health, redressing the abysmal record that we as a global culture have developed with respect to that area, particularly with respect to black womyn and other womyn of color.

Providing focus on those womyn's health issues that disproportionately impact lesbian womyn, e.g. breast cancer. Seeking to begin to redress the absence of significant focus on this subset of womyn's health, particularly in the black community.

Providing focus on HIV/AIDS, particularly among black gay and bisexual men. Providing focus on health issues for black people generally.

Economics: Providing focus on the impact that black lesbians and gays are having on the economy. Providing resources and support for those interested in entrepreneurial activity.

Providing focus on organizations that are by and for black lesbians and gays.

Providing a national voice against discrimination, especially where race, gender and sexuality discrimination intersect. Providing focus on the adverse economic impact of such discrimination.

In terms of creating mechanisms for supporting this work, I see a few possibilities. Doubtless, as we open up the process to full member participation and input, we will be able to identify more and better mechanisms for realizing whatever vision we end up adopting. In the meantime, my ideas are as follows:

I think that we will need subject area advisory councils or committees that would assist the Leadership Forum in crafting its position, and its position statements, in each of the above subject areas (or whatever other subject areas we adopt). Those advisory councils could be comprised of professionals in the respective fields, but their work should be informed by the input of all members interested in providing input in that particular subject area. Thus I also think that members should be encouraged to identify a subject matter "work area" within which we can count on their taking the time to provide their opinions, feedbacks, guidance, and direction.

I believe that we should be producing, out of our Subject Area Advisory Councils, and our membership work area teams, position papers that articulate the position of the Leadership Forum and the community that we seek to serve, on various matters. Even after our Advisory Councils and/or our Membership Work Area Teams have agreed on a position, I believe that our position papers should carry, embodied within the position statement, a "dissenting opinion" where there is significant support for such an opinion, so that the heterodoxy of our community (and the value of that heterodoxy) is acknowledged and celebrated, rather than stifled.

Separately, I believe that we should develop geographical area advisory groups as well as regional chapters. I believe that rather than carve up the nation ourselves, or along traditional geopolitical lines, we should encourage chapters to geographically self-define, with eligibility based on some critical minimum mass of memberships in each chapter. I also believe that the Leadership Forum should develop organizational memberships/affiliations in addition to individual memberships (though with the "power" of decision-making residing on the individual member level).

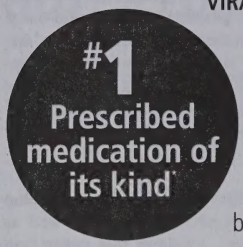
"My commitment to the community that I am seeking to serve is that for as long as I am allowed to serve as Executive Director of the Leadership Forum the agenda and structure of the Leadership Forum will be dictated by the membership of the Leadership Forum, and by the community of black lebians and gays that we seek to serve."

Finally, I believe that we need an enlarged, geographically and demographically representative, and active Board of Directors, and to that end, I believe that we will need to be aggressive in recruiting new members to the Board.

But as I've said before, my ideas are just my ideas. More important is the business of getting your ideas, and the ideas of others in [the] community, about where we should be heading as an organization, and as a national community of black lesbians and gays. I hope that the February conference can be the start of that work.

I hope you are as excited about the work that lies ahead as I am. I look forward to working with you to accomplish the things we must. Please let me know what you are willing to do to help. My e-mail address is AGVQuamina@aol.com

Alvan Quamina is the executive director of **AMASSI, Inc.** an AIDS service and housing provider in the City of Oakland. He is the Western Coordinator for **African American Men United Against AIDS**, and Chair of the **Alameda County African American AIDS State of Emergency Task Force.**



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WHAT YOUR **PROTEASE INHIBITOR** CAN BE:

help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

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tablets and oral powder

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*IMS NPA Prescription Data 8/98 – 5/99

POWERFUL AND
EASY TO LIVE WITH.

VIRACEPT
nelfinavir mesylate
tablets and oral powder

Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)
Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should <u>not</u> take with VIRACEPT:
- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:
- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight		Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
Kg	Lb			
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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CALL 1.888.VIRACEPT

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LEND A BROTHER A HAND

By Damon J. Murphy
MARIETTA, GEORGIA

Recently life taught me the value of being selfless in helping other black gay brothers in need. It is a lesson I will never forget and I am sure that I have forever touched a young man's life. I asked for his permission to tell our story and he said it MUST be told. For the protection of his identity I shall refer to him as Shawn.

While browsing on the internet one afternoon, I decided to log into a chat room. I simply asked, "Are there any serious brothers in this room that would like to chat?" I got more of a serious issue than I knew. Out of nowhere, Shawn private-messaged me and we began to share information about each other. Later he asked if we could exchange numbers and I agreed that it was all right for him to call me. A day later he did and I shared more with him in our short time of talking than I have with some people I see everyday.

Shawn is an eighteen year old high school senior in the Midwest who had been going through sexual abuse from a male family member since age 13. He shared intimate details about his life and his surroundings in a town that was extremely small and practically in the middle of nowhere. I began to feel for him and his issues as many times he would call me and cry about advances this family member would make and the verbal abuse he'd get from other family members. In a word he felt: "trapped."

I was reminded of when I was a youth traveling from my hometown of New York City into rural eastern North Carolina to visit relatives. I wondered how could any black gay man have a life there. That was when I was thirteen, twelve years ago. I couldn't imagine having the type of burdens this young man had to bear. Even worse, he was about an hour and change to the nearest big city, which by many people standards is rather small.

After months of talking to him via phone, sending him inspirational materials, and even speaking with school officials about him attending college in another area, I decided to take a trip to his town. Most of my friends encouraged me, but they were concerned for my well being. After all, can't people pretend to be something they are not over the internet?

A good friend of mine wanted to help me, so he came with me to enthusiastically help this young black gay man that we have only seen in pictures.

With the help of a rental car, we headed north and then west, a trip that took seven hours. I kept thinking along the way, that I must be crazy, but I am reminded of my internal drive from God to spread good in the world.

When I arrive in his small town, we meet three blocks away from his home at a gas station. In a whim, he climbs into the car and we head across the state line to the suburbs of the bigger city. We took a chance on him and he took a chance on us. This is not my typical daily routine. After all, it was a slight financial disturbance for me to do this in the first place. However, in a weekend I am able to talk to him face to face, let him cry all his sorrow out, laugh his joys, and explain his fears.

I am armed with Keith Boykin's book, "Respecting the Soul," which is nearly impossible (if at all) to find in his area. I also bring college materials, information on suicide prevention (which he has spoke of), and a Les Brown motivational tape. We went to the movies, restaurants, and an amusement park. My friend and I were excited because we'd never been to this city in which we went, but even more than being tourists for a moment, we were friends to someone forever. He has termed me "his hero", something never said to me in my life.

But what I envision is that this young man will turn into a wiser younger man who will give the gift I gave to him. The gift of LOVE. That was given to me by those who have come before me, people currently in my life, and by God always. I believe in the motto "To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required."

No matter where our lives lead, Shawn will not forget that two men came from Georgia, hundreds of miles away, in the name of brotherhood; brothers he could trust, who did not take advantage of him. I took a piece of his limited world and carved a window for him to see life differently. He had not heard of Keith Boykin, E. Lynn Harris, Clique Magazine, SBC, Venus, etc, things that many of us in larger metropolitan areas take for granted.

Though my situation is a little extreme and placed myself in a jeopardizing position, I urge brothers who have themselves together to lend a helping hand. Someone somewhere needs you.

Damon J. Murphy is a 25 year old New York City native living in metrpolitan Atlanta where he works for **Sprint Business**. A graduate of **Florida International University in Miami,** he holds a **BA in Psychology**. Damon is striving to continue his education in the Washington DC area and become a clinician who will add to the field of Psychology in sexual research in a multicultural context.

I AM WHO I AM

the art of Marvin Vines

TOLEDO, OHIO

Artist **Marvin Vines**, a native of Toledo, Ohio, made his transition in 1997. But what he left behind is a masterful collection of some 700 works, many of them giving visual voice to inner city youth, while others, as in the collection represented on the cover, the content page and these pages [under the collection title **"I Am Who I Am"**], exude a respect and dignity that is too rarely accorded the African American man. Vines received many awards and grants for his work which will be on display and on sale at many Africentric homosexual events this year. For brochures and direct sales information, contact Soul On Canvas Publications/ P.O. Box 10134/ Columbus, Ohio 43201/ 614.252.2616 fax: 614.252.5958/ web: www.souloncanvas.com

IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS

by Jennifer Glover
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

I KNOW THAT I COME FROM A TRIBE OF QUEENS.
STRONG WOMEN, TEACHERS & WARRIORS.
I WAS TOLD THE STORIES OF MY MOTHERS BEFORE ME.
LIVING TO DIE.
COLD AND SICK IN THE BELLY OF A SHIP.
DEHUMANIZED BY A WHIP & CHAINS.
SACRIFICED LIFE FOR THE WEALTH OF SOMEONE ELSE.

BLOOD OF MY MOTHERS DRIPPED IN VAIN.
MISUNDERSTOOD ARTHRITIS RIDDEN KNUCKLES.
LOSING COUNT OF YELLOW RAPE BABIES STOLEN AT DAWN.

STARING AT THE NOOSE FROM THE PORCH, WHILE
SHADOWS
RUN FROM THE HOODS OF THE NIGHT.

ABHORRENCE, RACISM, SEXISM HITTING & WHIPPING THEIR FLESH.
SCARRED BY THE WAKE OF HATE,
ABUSE AND MISUSE.
GENERATIONS OF HOPES AND DREAMS UPON THEIR BACKS,
WHILE THEIR EYES CRY NEVERS.

IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS I SAW MY MOTHER.
THEY INSTRUCTED, DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
TAUGHT TO OBEY HER MAN,
HER MEN WHILE CARRYING HER NATION IN HER STOMACH.
CRYING TEARS THAT MEANT NOTHING,
WHILE HIT & KICKED BY THE ONE SHE LOVES.
HER MAN.

SHE CARRIED THOSE BABIES WHICH WERE FORCED UPON HER YOUTH.
IT DRAINED THE OASIS OF HER HEART.

STOOD IN LINE, SOUP KITCHENS WITH THE NEIGHBORS HUNGRY CHILDREN.

MAKING SURE WE CAME INTO THE WORLD, WHILE SHE DIED YOUNG AND ANGRY.
SOBBING TODDLERS RAN ABOUT, LAYING HELPLESS AND COLD.
WATCHING FROM THE DISTANCE AS THE SYSTEM STOLE US,
RAPED US AND CREATED JADED OFFSPRING.

SHE, WAS FORCED NOT TO FEEL, TO NEED, TO BE NEEDED.
CAMOUFLAGED HOPE, VENOM IN HER VEINS.
ALL WHILE HOLDING HER HEAD HIGH.
SHE, WAS EXPECTED TO GIVE ALL AND RECEIVE NOTHING IN RETURN.
NO FEELING, NO COMFORT, NO ENERGY, NO SOLACE.

IN THE MIDST OF BLACKNESS I SAW WOMEN.

OUR WOMEN, BLACK WOMEN, WOMEN OF COLOR RUNNING.

RUNNING TO THEIR EMOTION, THEIR VOICE.
DYING FROM WITHIN WHILE PASSION TRIES TO FILTER FROM THEIR EYES.
RUNNING TO THE EXISTENCE OF LIFE AND LIVING.
SUBMERGING AS WHITE RIGHTS BECOME SLAMMING DOORS.

THE REFLECTION OF STRUGGLE, DEFLECTION AND REJECTION.
SOME WITH FUTILE HOPELESS DREAMS.
TRAILS OF TEARS AND STOLEN LAND.
OUR WOMEN AT WAR WITH BEING HUMAN,
FIGHTING AND STRIVING FOR THEIR HUMANITY.

WE GIVE THE UNIVERSE OUR ALL WHILE CHARLATAN SMILES GLEAM THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

PERPETUATED DEATH TRAVELING THROUGH THE CENTURIES,
FUELING THE MILLENNIUM WITH NEW BLOOD.

I KNOW OUR OPPRESSION HAS GIVEN US STRENGTH.
WE ARE BEAUTY, POWER AND INTEGRITY.

THIS IS WHAT I WAS TOLD.
THIS IS WHAT I KNOW IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS

Jennifer Glover, pictured above standing center with fellow members of Black Coffee writers and readers group, is the Sisters Affairs Editor for SBC magazine.

BUILD, BUILD BUILD

by Pastor Greg Smith
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Take action in our lives. Take action in our communities. Just a Note. We must build in every aspect. When I say 'Just a Note' it is a reminder of what we must do.

I am reminded that we have had a long struggle to acquire our basic human rights to love one another without public denunciation. It is imperative that we begin to openly acknowledge who we are and take some of the heat off of our effeminate brothers and masculine sisters. We are all in this together.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that society has dealt a severe blow to the minds of our community and has weakened the souls of many in their innocence. We must build the hearts and souls of our sisters and brothers. We must build the content and character of our sisters and our brothers. We must build a no non-sense offensive against the rhetoric that attempts to destroy and weaken our sisters and our brothers.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of story after story of parents and siblings cast off by the teachings of a misinformed church. God's love is unconditional and for everyone. We must commit to reforming the hearts and minds of parents. We must build a better understanding with family. We must build safe havens of communication for families to become better informed.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of Paris is Burning and how the images therein informed a community about outreach and gave visual testament to the meaning of Extended Family.

We must build in the areas of the arts. We must support our sisters and brothers in the arts. We must seek them out and create venues and avenues for them to share their expressions. We must build with edutainment. As First Lady Hillary Rodham-Clinton said "Art is not a luxury, it is a necessity."

Build, Build, Build

I am reminded of the frequency of domestic violence in our community, contrasted with the infrequency of long term relationships. We must build on developing healthier, more nurturing relationships. We build internally to share externally. We must build not with the concept of 'A Knight (or Queen) in Shining Armor', but the concept of loving and being loved in the healthiest of ways.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that we have grown further and further apart along the same gender lines. We brothers must build healthier relationships with our lesbian sisters and our lesbian sisters must build healthier relationships with their gay brothers. We are sisters and brothers. We must do this work together to insure equality within and beyond our community.When building as a family, a brother looks out for a sister and a sister looks out for a brother.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that we have remained deaf to the needs of the Transgender community. Our community was built on the backs of transgenders. They have taken the brunt of negative language, discrimination and public humiliation, and not just from the heterosexual community. We must build with a consciousness that knows our transgender siblings have a plate and place card at this table.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of the issue of bisexuality. This issue has divided many. I have witnessed some of our (self-defined) leaders who struggled with this concept and currently only take an affirming position because it is politically correct. We must build a better understanding of bisexuality to dissolve our own prejudices and shunning of this part of our community that has always existed and is deservedly growing in visibility.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of our weakened community structure. We must build, build, build social networks (i.e...rap groups, chat rooms), creating links that give us the ability to disseminate information quickly, adding to our cache of resources.

Build, Build, Build.

And finally, I am reminded of our lack of faith-community resources. We must build faith centers in each of our communities. We must have our own safe faith havens to facilitate spiritual growth. When the conservative church---black or white---mobilizes against us they use their congregations and their mailing lists. We must build similar congregations and mailing lists.

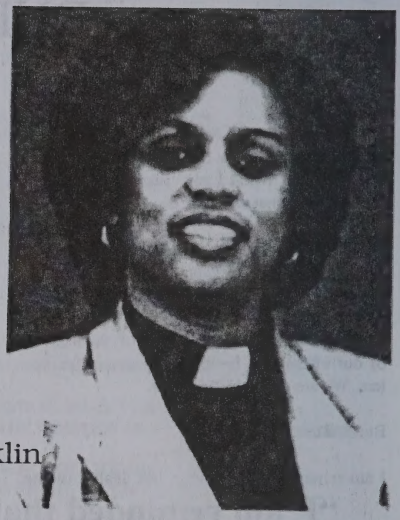
And we must encourage some of our young sisters and brothers in the seminaries to come and establish their own faith centers.

We must build in the wilderness, we must build were many dare not go, we must build by faith.

We Must Build, Build, Build.

"I am reminded that we have remained deaf to the needs of the Transgender Community. Our community was built on the backs of transgenders. They have taken the brunt of negative language, discrimination and public humiliation, and not just from the heterosexual community. We must build with a consciousness that knows our transgender siblings have a plate and place card at this table."

Pastor Greg Smith is the Founding Minister of New Light With God Community Church.



SPIRITUALITY: A CALL TO ACTION

by Rev. Jenenne R. Macklin
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

If our spirituality does not propel us into action, what good is it? When we look back over our history and reference our ancestors, we find, at the foundation of their very existence, struggles, challenges, victories and great achievement. In a word...spirituality. Before organized religion, spirituality was the force, the presence, and their power; it was the catalyst for their action. Whether it was the movement toward freedom, steps toward peace on the center stage of life, or fighting for the right to vote, spirituality was the force underlying the action. All of the saints and sages, masters and prophets, faith healers, priestesses and shamans allowed their spirituality to propel them into action.

"If your spirituality doesn't propel you to action, what good is it?"

Spirituality is not passive. Spirituality is a force, a presence, that when embraced fully propels us into action. Maybe it's to live our life more as a whole person, kicking down the doors of fear and stepping out of the closet into greater faith. Maybe it's helping others outside of your immediate circle of friends. Maybe it's being active on the stage of world politics to help our communities. Maybe it's simply spending responsibly. Maybe it's making a greater commitment to live according to a higher calling. Maybe it's accepting that you are sacred and divine and acting like it. Whatever "it" is, action is the end result. Through action healing happens. Through action our soul rejoices. Through action we play a key role in making a difference in our lives, our communities and in this world.

We are being called more and more to take action on a larger scale, to recognize that we are under attack by forces far greater than any and all external forces: our own fears and apathy. Our action has to take the form of commitment to life through our spirituality. No longer can we allow fear and shame to stand in the way of our rightful freedom as children of God. No longer can we allow the Willie Lynch mentality to separate us from our brothers and sisters. No longer can we allow our forward motion to be propelled by the few with the courage and willingness to take a stand. No longer can we allow our commitment to be lukewarm. No longer can we sing praises on Sunday and return to closets on Monday. No longer can we live in fear of the very God who embraces us with nothing but love. No longer can we look to someone or something outside of ourselves to save us. No longer can we look over our shoulder thinking we will be rescued from the chaos we create. Again, I say, if your spirituality does not propel you to action, what good is it?

The man that many of you hold as your Savior, Jesus, took action. The people many of us revere in our history, Martin, Gandhi, Jackie Robinson, Madame C.J. and Malcolm, took action. The woman whose strength and tenacity we marvel at, Harriet, took action. The woman, who speaks loud and proud, Maxine, took action. The man who spoke and said "Enough" in the face of AIDs, Phil, took action. The list is growing, yet it still does not fully represent our numbers, our strength or courage. Each of us has something that only we can do. The entire universe is waiting for us to step up to the plate and do what it is we are here to do for ourselves, our communities and the world.

Spirituality isn't just about temporarily feeling good or reaping personal prosperity, healing and abundance. It isn't about being passive. It's about recognizing and embracing the Truth of who you are: a child of God made in the dynamic, infinite, powerful image and likeness of our Creator and allowing that to propel you into action. In the realization of the Truth of your oneness, you will find all the courage, strength, faith, determination, wisdom, creativity to act! Ask yourselves, if your spirituality doesn't propel you to action, what good is it? Peace.

Reverend Jenenne R. Macklin is the founder and spiritual leader of **Living In The Light Ministry.** Since her ordination in 1990, she has lead many retreats, workshops and luctures on overcoming fear, living by spiritual principles and forgiveness. She is also the author of the inspirational book **Faith The Size of a Mustard Seed.**

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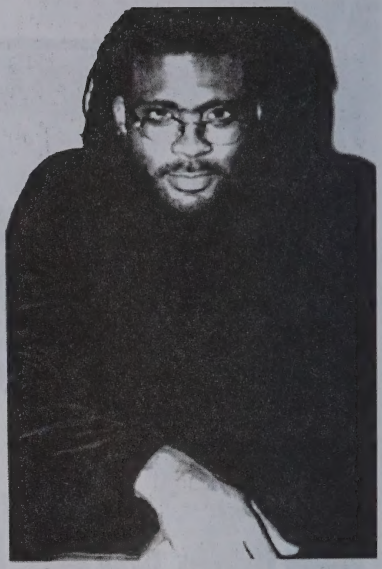


FINDING THE PEACE BEYOND THE PAIN

by Sundiata Najja Alaye'
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

I'm Still Standing

We are so blessed. We are still here. Certainly, there is no denying that we have been through a lot. But we are still here and have the opportunity to touch happiness. After all that we have been through, it's time that we found some peace in our lives. It's time that we started to live if we haven't already.

I see faces in my mind all the time. Familiar faces. Beautiful faces of men, women, and children I knew. Faces that I will never be able to touch again, but that exists in my mind or in the photo albums in my wall unit that I seldom look at any more. There is the occasional videotape that I run across and play to make me remember. I don't want to forget. I don't ever want to forget the many lessons I learned from all of life's experiences and from losing as many friends and family members as I did. Yet the primary lesson I've learned, the one that sticks most prominently in my life, is the lesson that these Brothers and Sisters taught me. Live.

You see, many of the people that I loss didn't start living until they knew they were dying. It was a notion that I started to grasp in the middle of the AIDS madness. A lesson that stuck with me, took shape, and became a principle theme in my life. Many years ago I set out on a path toward finding my peace and living whole. This reconciliation of my body, mind, and soul completely changed my life. It was a painful process for it made me look, not at what others were doing or had done to me, but rather, what I was or was not doing to and for myself. I had to deal with my behavior, my pain, my issues, and my self-esteem. I had to comfort myself and confront my truth as a means of finding love inside of me and peace in my life.

My soul searching has also given me a way of recognizing and paying homage to those who have gone before me. In my own way I am letting them know that neither their lives nor their deaths were in vain. I've learned and learned well the lessons their presence, and now their absence, was designed to teach me. I know now why they were here.

Get Here If You Can

Something is happening now in the world. A change is looming over the horizon and if you are in tuned with the Spirit, you can feel the energy. It's not necessarily a visual change, something tangible, something we can see. It's a lot deeper than that. Much, much deeper. There seems to be a movement, a silent call moving about the earth, asking, no, begging us to come into a more spiritual awareness. In numerous conversations, I've tried to analogize it by describing it as the door to Noah's Arc. The door is beginning to close once again. I don't know what that represents, and I don't know what happens if the door closes and we are not on board. I only know that this call to a more spiritual consciousness is ultimately what will save us from hopelessness, from despair, from grief, and even from ourselves. Please, Brothers and Sisters, take these into consideration:

Mending Your Spirit.

Invite the Spirit, the God of your understanding, back into your life. Stay in constant prayer for clarity, direction, and an understanding of your individual purpose and path. Remember, we have a divine function and mission on this earth. That mission is to learn, to teach, to love, and to heal. That is all.

Some, not all of us, have burdened spirits. Spirits burdened by insecurities over our body image, internalized homophobia, toxic relationships, and the grief associated with losing so many of our dear friends. Mostly, though, our spirits are burdened because we've buried our connection to the Creator - our spirituality. For so long we have heard that because of who we are and because of who we love that we have no right nor do we have access to the Creator. But we do. We all do and you must believe that.

There is nothing wrong with you. Never let anyone tell you that there is. We are not crazy, deviant, or sick. Who we love is who we love, and love is not a sickness. I don't have all the answers. I don't know why we were created this way. Perhaps we were selected for this mission as a means of injecting more love, more tolerance, and more compassion into a world that is severely lacking in each. Perhaps we are here to introduce a collective healing, a healing that can only occur one soul at a time. It all begins with you.

Loving You

Nurturing your spirit will automatically prompt you to love yourself more and heaven knows this is something that we all need so desperately. Many of us can think back to instances in our lives where we could have easily overcome, avoided, or otherwise help to heal a situations or event by loving ourselves more than we did.

Now is a good time to do it.

Many of us don't really know ourselves because we are sometimes so busy pretending to be other people to please other people, that by the time we are alone, we don't know who we are! But growth only occurs when exposed wounds are healed, and healing suggests coming to know yourself. Find and face your truth. This will require you to retrace your steps, surface sometimes painful experiences of your past, and address them lovingly so that you can forgive them and move them from your consciousness. You will then begin to resurface your natural self, find out who you are again, and love you for you and for all of the beautiful gifts you have to offer.

Loving you also brings a renewed insight into living and brings an appreciation for life, accountability, and responsibility. It will bring a respect for your existence and the existence of your Brothers and Sisters, meaning that it will help you to see your Brothers and Sisters as an extension of you, and not as a substitutions for your pain. It will help you to see them not as your enemy, your nemesis, or as your competition, but as an extension of your love.

Remember that your life and your existence is a gift from the Creator. But also remember that the Creator gives gifts that are meant for everyone. This says that you are a gift to us all and healed people heal the whole world.

Letting Go

Learn to surrender the results. Everything in life is divinely orchestrated. Our destinies have been defined, and we are only walking our natural paths.

Learn to surrender people. You cannot control people, their actions, their behaviors, or their attitudes. One of the greatest lesson in life that you may ever learn is to release people to be who they are without it shaking your peace.

Fear is a creation of our unconscious thought process. It comes to us when we do not think or respond from love. Love gives you new insight and brings with it a peaceful existence.

Always know that you have a choice in how you process anything that is said or done to you, and know that your reactions can influence outcomes. You can walk your path in fear or you can walk that path in love. If you react from fear, you allow your emotions to take you out of peace. However, if you take a step back, pray, and ask to be able to see a situation, any situation, differently, you receive a powerful enlightenment that will reveal to you the lessons in love that you are to take from the experience. With this as your primary thought process, you will always be at peace.

Prayer, surrender, and forgiveness gives you everything you need. Your miracle comes simply by changing your perceptions, changing your own mind. Shifting your thoughts from fear to love reminds your conscious thoughts that it is in your defenselessness that your safety really lies.

Applying Love

Once you've learned to commit to the spirit and love yourself more, not only will you learn to treat yourself better but, one of the more key benefits is that you'll learn to treat others better.

Recently, a friend was describing a situation where he approached a Brother in a club who he thought was attractive. My friend, who himself is very attractive, explained that when he extended his hand to the Brother to introduce himself, the Brother looked at him and said, "What makes you think that someone like me is going to talk to someone like you!" Even I felt the blow of that comment, not only because it was so unnecessary, but mostly because it shows just how separated this Brother is from his own reality. Somehow he believes that he is somehow different, special, or better than other people. I pray for his awakening before it's too late.

Underneath all we pile on the outside to make us appear more separate, we are not. No matter what we do to make ourselves appear more attractive, more appealing, and unalike, we are connected. None of us, not one single one of us, is better or more than the next. We are all the same. Think of us all as spokes of a wheel. Though we may branch out in different directions, we radiate from the same center. That center is the Creator, the Creator and His Love.

Always keep love present. Your peace is my peace, and my peace is yours. We all share a common denominator, and that is the love we are capable of giving and sharing that is to be used to heal the world and heal each other. Whatever you do, always, always remember to do it kindly.

Putting It Into Practice

Admittedly, changing our minds to change our lives can be challenging. To think and respond from love is a radical approach to the way we have lived our lives all this time. But if you have found that previous methods have never worked or only worked for a short time, try this approach and watch how miraculously life begins to change.

Many of us know what we want. We even know that we have what it takes to get or to do what we want. Only for some reason, we don't take the initiative to get the process started. Sometimes its fear of change, sometimes its fear of realizing our own brilliance. You see, it's not always the darkness that we are afraid of. Sometimes we are afraid of our own light! From the depths of your soul, pull out the inertia you need to simply get the process started, and the momentum you'll require to keep the process going. Life will change dramatically and you will find a new sense of purpose.

"Don't be afraid of anything; of change, of growth, of the past, of the present, nor of what will happen tomorrow. There is no fear. There is only love."

So here are my notes and my thoughts about what we may need and what we may want to do differently, again, or even for the first time. Indeed this is a time for change, and an opportunity to put things into proper perspective, to heal our lives and change our focus. This is a significant time in our history and I can only imagine the heights we can reach with a community of disciplined mines, healed, whole, and loving people. It is my warmest dream.

Each and every one of you will be in my prayers. Hang in there. Your peace, your happiness, and treasures beyond your imagination are merely a whisper away.

Peace, Blessings, Light & Love

Sundiata Najja Alaye' is the author of the the new self-help book Empty Promises Private Pain - A Light Out of Darkness available through Moyo Press - $15.95. Mr. Alaye' can be reached online at www.moyopress.com

MY GAY PROBLEM, THEIR BLACK PROBLEM

by Earl Ofari Hutchinson
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA---I still cannot forget the scene I saw in a movie during the mid-1970's for two reasons. One, it was the first time that I had ever seen two men passionately kiss on the screen. Two, there was the reaction from the mostly black audience. They went berserk. They screamed, jeered, and hooted at the screen. It took several minutes for the crowd to quiet down and ushers to restore order. As I left the theater I listened to the young men talk. Their contempt and disgust for these two men spilled out into the street and into the parking lot. They called them "faggots," "punks," and "sissies." It seemed as if they were feverishly trying to scrape the slime off themselves that the scene of these two men kissing had left on them.

A year or so later, I was at a local political meeting. Afterwards, while talking with a friend, a young black man came up to us. My friend winked at me and whispered "he's a queer," and quickly walked away. I stood there alone with him. After a moment of awkward silence, we started talking. I mentioned that I was a jogger. His eyes immediately lit up. He said he was too. He quickly suggested that maybe we could go jogging together. Even though I really did not know anything about the man and neither, I suspect, did my friend, I still froze in naked panic.

I thought about the young men who jeered the gay characters on the screen at the theater. At the time I thought that the antics of the jeering young men were downright silly and in poor taste. I now realized that I was no different than them. I had the same horror of, and prejudice against, gays as they had. But why? Did they threaten me? Why did they stir queasy and violent passions in so many of us? Did I feel an even greater dislike for a black man who was gay? Did they threaten and challenge my fragile masculinity at the most base ambiguous level?

They did.

And this forced me to take a deep soul search into my own homophobic fears. Even though I hated what I saw and had no rational explanation for these fears, I understood why they were buried tomb-like in me.

From cradle to grave, much of America has drilled into black men the thought that they are less than men. This made many black men believe and accept the gender propaganda that the only real men in American society are white men. In a vain attempt to recapture their denied masculinity, many black men mirrored America's traditional fear and hatred of homosexuality. They swallowed whole the phony and perverse John Wayne definition of manhood; that real men talked and acted tough, shed no tears, never showed emotions.

These were the prized strengths of manhood. When men broke the prescribed male code of conduct and showed their feelings, they were sneered at as weaklings, and their manhood questioned. Many black men who bought this malarkey did not heap the same scorn on women who were lesbians. White and black gay women did not pose the same threat as gay men. They were women and that meant that they were fair game to be demeaned and marginalized by many men.

Many blacks, in an attempt to distance themselves from gays and avoid confronting their own biases, dismissed homosexuality as "Their thing." Translated: homosexuality was a kinky contrivance of white males and females that reflected the decadence of white America. They made no distinction between white gays and other whites. To them, whites were whites were whites.

Many blacks listened to countless black ministers shout and condemn to fire and brimstone any man who dared think about, yearn for, or, God forbid, engage in the "godless" and "unnatural act" of having a sexual relationship with another man. If they had any doubts about it, they fell back on the good book. They could, as generations of bible-toting white preachers did, flip to the oft-cited line in Leviticus that sternly calls men laying down with men, "the abomination."

While many Americans made gays their gender bogeymen, many blacks made black gay men their bogeymen and waged open warfare against them. Black gay men became the pariahs among pariahs, and, wherever possible, every attempt was made to railroad them out of black life. Some of these efforts have been especially pathetic. Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, a known homosexual and the major mover and shaker behind the historic 1963 March on Washington, was sternly warned by some March leaders not to publicly "embarrass" or compromise the March by his personal conduct. A popular black nationalist magazine of that day took frequent and dizzy delight in calling Rustin "the little fairy." No black leader publicly challenged its homophobia.

In Soul on Ice, published in 1969, then black radical Eldridge Cleaver viciously mugged James Baldwin for his homosexuality and declared homosexuality the ultimate "racial death wish." No black leader publicly challenged Cleaver on this point, and his outrageous fad theories on sexuality were praised by an entire generation of radical wannabees as if they were the sacrosanct word from on high.

A decade later black gay filmmaker, Marlon Riggs, hoped that the hostile public attitudes of many blacks toward gays had lessened enough to at least permit a civil discussion among them about masculinity and homophobia. In a purposely ambiguous and veiled concession to the anti-gay mood, Riggs stole a bit of the rhetoric of black militants and proclaimed that "Black men loving black men is the revolutionary act of our times." It did not work. Riggs found that anti-gay bigotry was just as entrenched as ever among many blacks.

Rappers such as Ice Cube still rapped "Real niggers ain't gay" on his "Death Certificate" album. Leading Afrocentrists swore that "homosexuality is a deviation from Africentricity." And bushels of black ministers, with generous support from their white Christian fundamentalist brethren, still branded homosexuality "a sin before God." Some blacks escalated their low intensity warfare against gays to an all-out, take no prisoners battleground.

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan made it almost part of his divine mission to attack homosexuality. Even though the Million Man March publicly welcomed homosexuals and treated the ones who participated civilly, no one really believed that this represented a sea

change in attitude among blacks toward gays. If some did, Farrakhan quickly wiped out that notion in a TV interview with conservative newsmen Evans and Novack in March, 1997. He made it clear that he still regarded homosexuality as an "unnatural act" and would discourage the practice whenever and wherever he could.

The traditional civil rights leaders, however, continued to denounce homophobia, and urge support of gay rights. They reminded blacks that homophobia and racism were two sides of the same coin and that many of the same white conservatives---from Pat Buchanan to Jerry Falwell---that ruthlessly savaged gays, were the same ones that ruthlessly savaged civil rights.

They were right. But, their argument still cut little weight with many blacks. The one and only comprehensive survey conducted in 1995 that measured black attitudes toward gays found that blacks, like whites, had not slackened up on one bit in there hostility toward gays. More damning and ominous for blacks, they still continued to heap special scorn on black gay men. The one potential bright spot in this even had a taint. The survey found that there was less anti-gay sentiment among the more educated, less religious and more affluent blacks but ONLY if the gay male was white. They still launched black gay men far, far out into the netherworld of contempt.

That anti-gay feeling runs so deep among many African-Americans that there is a virtual blackout of any discussion or activities of black gay men. Black gays and lesbians have held a number of National Black Gay Conferences since 1987. Yet there has been only scant mention of them in the black press. The first national black gay and lesbian publication, BLK, might as well gather dust in the Smithsonian Museum for all that most blacks know about it.

Some blacks justify the out-of-sight, out-of-mind exclusion of gay men from black life by arguing that the gay life style is a major threat to the black family. This hinges on the shaky assumption that there are thousands of gay men lying in wait to subvert traditional family values. Beyond the fact that no one really knows how many black or non-black men consider themselves exclusively homosexual, much of what passes for traditional family values has long been turned into shambles. The happy face Ozzie and Harriet family of the drowsy 1950's that conservatives pant away for has been totally exposed by writers as a fraud even in that day. Many men drank, gambled, had adulterous affairs, beat their wives and kids, and took a complete hands-off-attitude toward child rearing and nurturing. Many of them were absentee fathers. The only difference is that they were physically in the home.

Even if Ozzie and Harriet was not a complete fabrication, America of the 1990's bears no resemblance to the 1950's. The majority of women must work outside the home. They are better educated, are pursuing careers in business, the professions and the trades. They have drastically changed the shape of gender and family relations in America. There were all sorts of family combinations in the 1990's that were barely imaginable a generation ago.

There were single working women, single working men, grandparents, single sex male and female couples, step parents, foster parents, designated guardians, foster homes, and even children that are raising children. If the American family still fully resembled the storybook Ozzie and Harriet family, the list of the mightiest destabilizers of the black family which many can recite by heart would still remain the same: poverty, unemployment, lack of education, chronic disease, violence, drugs, alcoholism, imprisonment, and early death. Homosexuals are not on this list.

Black gay men continue to feel like men without a people. They carry the triple burden of being black, male, and gay. They are rejected by many blacks and sense that they are only barely tolerated by white gays. Many black gay men feel trapped, tormented and confused by this quandary. They still spend sleepless nights and endless days figuring out ways to repress, hide and deny their sexuality from family members, friends, and society. Black gay men worry that the hatred of other black men towards them will not change as long as they feel that their manhood is subverted, as long as they feel that they must accept America's artificial standard of what a "real" man is, and anti-gay attitudes remain firmly rooted in much of the American public.

In time, more black men will come out of the closet and more black men will meet them, get to know them better as people too, or in some cases, discover that they have known them all along as a family member, a friend, or an acquaintance. This will force even more black men to reexamine their own dubious definitions of manhood and confront their own homophobia. This will go far toward ridding them of their fear of black gays as their bogeymen. But in the mean time, much work needs to be done in the 21st Century.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of **The Crisis in Black and Black.**
email:ehutchi344@aol.com

A POEM FOR THOUGHT

by RuNell Ni Ebo

Lord, Lord
Why did You make me Black?
Why did You make someone
The world wants to hold back?

Black is the color of dirty clothes,
The color of grimy hands and feet
Black is the color of darkness,
The color of tire-beaten streets.

Why did You give me thick lips,
A broad nose and kinky hair?
Why did You make someone
Who receives the hatred stare?

Black is the color of the bruised eye
When someone gets hurt.
Black is the color of darkness,
Black is the color of dirt.

How come my bone structure's so thick,
My hips and cheeks are high?
How come my eyes are brown
And not the color of daylight sky?

Why do people think I'm useless?
How come I feel so used?
Why do some people see my skin
And think I should be abused?

Lord I just don't understand.
What is it about my skin?
Why do some people want to hate me
And not know the person within?

Black is what people are "listed"
When others want to keep them away.
Black is the color of shadows cast.
Black is the end of the day.

Lord you know my own people mistreat me
And I know this just ain't right.
They don't like my hair.
They say I'm too dark or too light.

Lord don't You think it's time for You
To make a change?
Why don't You re-do creation and
Make everyone the same?

GOD ANSWERED:

Why did I make you Black?
Why did I make You Black?

Get off your knees and look around.
Tell me, what do you see?
I didn't make you in the image of darkness,
I made you in likeness of ME!

I made you the color of coal from which
Beautiful diamonds are formed.
I made you the color of oil, the black gold that
Keeps people warm.

I made you from the rich, dark earth that can
Grow the food you need.
Your color's the same as the black stallion, a
Majestic animal is he.

I didn't make you in the image of darkness.
I made you in likeness of ME!

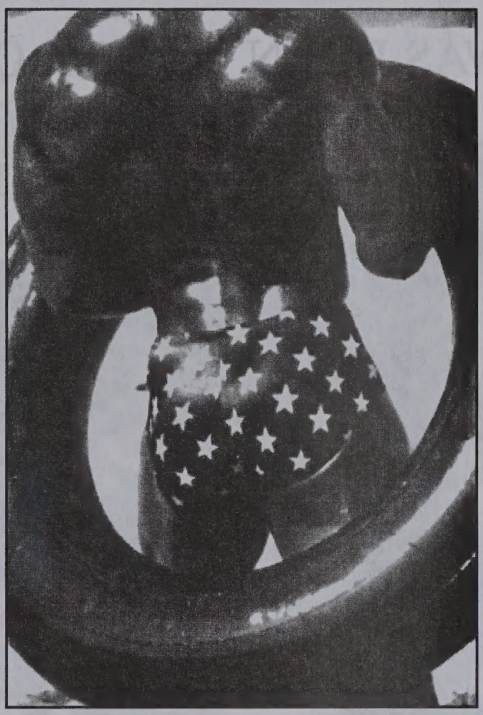
All the colors of the heavenly rainbow can be
Found throughout every nation.
But when all of those colors were blended, you
Became my greatest creation.

Your hair is the texture of lamb's wool.
Such a humble little creature is he.
I am the Shepherd who watches them.
I am the One who will watch over thee.

You are the color of midnight sky.
I put the stars' glitter in your eyes.
There is a smile hidden behind your pain.
That's why your cheeks are so high.

You are the color of dark clouds formed,
When I send My strongest weather.
I made your lips full so when you kiss the one
that you love, they will remember.

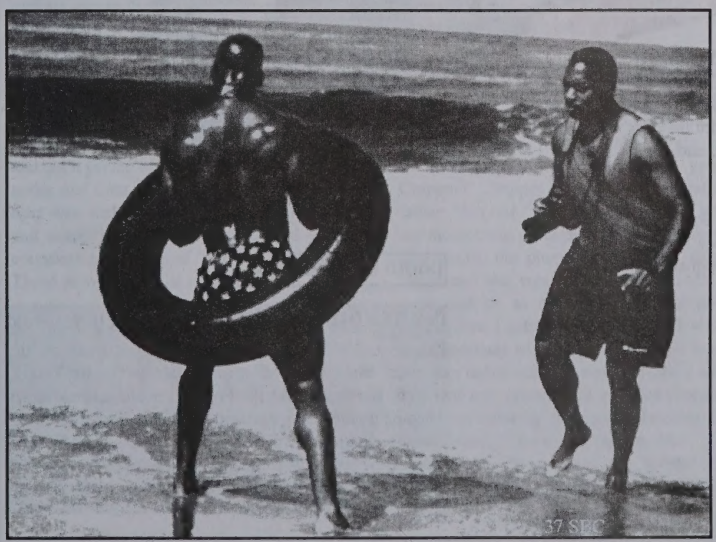
Your stature is strong, your bone structure thick
To withstand the burdens of time.
The reflection you see in the mirror...
The image that looks back is MINE.



IF SATURN WERE A MAN

His rings would be levels of pride and achievement
His body would be strength and integrity
His core would be faith and stability
His stars would be family, friends and beacons of love

---photographer Greg McNeal
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



Greg McNeal is an award-winning photographer whose work has graced the pages and covers of several national publications as well as many community-conscious and AIDS/HIV awareness ad campaigns. The above image, entitled SATURN, will be one of three images in an exhibition called **Reflections In Black: A History of 19th and 20th Century African American Photographers,** touring with the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture in February of this year.

Photo to the left: photgrapher McNeal working with model Joeseph Whitman

I WAS BORN TO BE A QUEEN

by Nahshon Anderson
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Everybody asked me was I high when I did it. I was not high. I was on a natural high. It's like a light has been turned on and it's making me become the person I was always afraid of being. It was freedom. And I enjoyed every single minute of it.

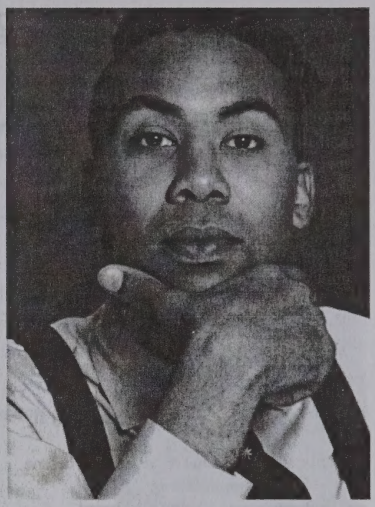
The moment I stepped out on Colorado Boulevard, people were honking, people were taking pictures of me, people were calling me The Rose Queen. People embraced me so much it kept feeding my enthusiasm. And I started crying inside because it was like everybody had come to see me.

So I proceeded all the way down Colorado Boulevard, all the way to Green Street where I finally caught up to the parade, and it was funny, the police were looking at me and all the officials that worked for the Rose Parade were looking at me in that in-no-way-shape-or-form-does-he-belong-here way. And that's the very reason why I did what I did, because in no way shape or form are they for anything that I'm about. I'm black, I'm a male, I'm gay, and I'm a queen.

In 111 years there has only been one black Rose Queen. So I did it. And I want all the little boys and girls to know, whether they're white or black or Japanese or handicap that not only are you a queen but you can be The Rose Queen. Just like me.

photo by Raul Roa

Nahshon Anderson, the 21 year old Pasadena, California native featured last year on the cover of **SBC** and profiled in the story **"To Be Young, Gifted, Black and Homosexual"** , made national news when he donned his gown and crown and leaped onto the Queen's Court float at the first **Tournament of Roses Parade** of the new millennium, where he waved and blew kisses to the crowd before being led off by security.



MOMMY'S PROPERTY DADDY'S BOY

by Edward James Hampton Jr.
ALBANY, CALIFORNIA

There are two sides to every story. The only problem was that I was afraid of being on either side. The conflict would arise the same way every time. The day would start with my father placing me on top of his broad shoulders and showing me off to the world, his world: pool halls, boxing rings, back alleys, barber shops, number rooms, and jitney stations. When asked where we were going, no detailed explanation was required - only two words, "the streets." The streets belonged to men and the streets of the Hill District belonged to black men. Whatever happened here was our business.

The only women invited into these places were the second women. They didn't carry the primary titles of mother, grandmother, aunt, or wife. Many of them were beautiful, intelligent, and always polite to the other fathers' sons and me. But it was very clear that they were waiting for their chance to carry a primary title, to replace our mothers. I found it easy to determine which of the second women were in line for my father. "Don't tell your mother about her" and then he'd give me the look: direct eye contact and a devilish smile while shaking his head in the affirmative. He'd reach his clinched fist turned on its side out to me. I'd clinch mine and tap it on top of his. He'd bring his fist from under and then on top of mine. Tap. The contract was sealed with a "pound." These secrets and others bonded me to my dad as they did countless other sons of The Hill to their dads. These secrets made us men.

As an effeminate boy, it was very important for me to maintain my dad's trust. I wanted to be just like him. I wanted to be a real man. I wanted to be included in the world that belonged to men. I had heard both my father and mother talk about the men who acted like women. Everyone hated them. Even Reverend Winsett, who spoke to God personally, didn't like them. He called them homosexuals and said that they were an abomination before God. I asked my mother what abomination meant. She told me that it meant, "Faggots who try to act like women would burn in hell." I could tell by her delivery of this message that this was one lesson she intended for me to learn well.

I didn't know what I was doing, but for some reason everyday I heard the words, "stop acting like a girl, don't cry, you're not a sissy, be tough, don't act like a little bitch." Once when I was five and playing with paper dolls I had drawn and cut out, my mother threw me into our apartment wall full force and screamed, I will not raise a faggot." A faggot---by now I knew very well what that meant. Why was she being so mean to me? How could she call me one of those people who God didn't like? I had to prove to her that I was a real man like my dad, not a faggot. This is why when I returned home, and my mother asked about the second women, I didn't tell her.

"I know he was out with one of his bitches again." I heard my mother talking to my aunt on the phone. "He thinks he's so damn slick." Oh God, she knows. Somehow she always knows. "Who went to the circus with you and Chipper?" Chipper is what everyone called my father. "No one." Immediately I knew lying to my mother was a mistake. Before the words left my mouth, the phone had dropped from her hands and she was all over me. "Don't stand there and lie to me to protect that no-good nigga. Now I asked you who he was with? He was obviously with someone or there wouldn't be three ticket stubs." I was defeated. I was terrified of my mother, and my five-year-old wit could not come up with an explanation for the extra ticket. "There was no one else." I stood my ground. "Where was my father?" I was thinking, when the first backhand made contact with my face. I felt the tears coming, but I didn't want to cry and be a faggot. I didn't want to break the bond with my dad and tell her about the second woman either. "Don't lie to me! You stupid..." was all I heard before the opposite side of my face was introduced to what my mother proudly called "the old backhand slap." At this point, the tears were flowing, but I was determined not to lose. "Stop crying, where's my belt?" I hated her belt. "No, no, no! I didn't do anything." "Get me my God-damned belt." I was jumping up and down pleading at this point, and any degree of masculinity I tried to portray was gone. I had lost. "He was with..." It was too late. The belt came from every direction: across my head, over my back, and back around to my face. It ended, as always, when she was out of breath. Heaving for air in-between sobs I was left to deal with my own hurt feelings, welted body, and destroyed ego. I knew what I had done. I had betrayed the bond between my father, myself, and all men; and I deserved everything that had just happened to me.

When my father arrived, I couldn't look him in the eyes. I could tell by the way that he dropped his head that he knew I had betrayed him. This fight was especially bad. It seemed to last forever. The place was a wreck, and dad had punched a hole in the wall. I was always amazed at how eventually everything stopped. The screaming, the cursing, the hitting, all seemed to disappear, and everyone just went to sleep. I learned to savor those early morning moments. Even as an adult today, I am happiest in the early morning hours, when everyone else is asleep.

Edward James Hampton Jr.
is the founder and publisher of **Victory! Magazine**, a gay and lesbian business and entreprenurial journal

THREESOME

by Marvin K. White
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

nothing ugly fly

i am black bird two and three winged cessna
beat sound like night falling
call and caw sound like no bird heard
sound like tickle and pain
crushed betweens lid and lash
sound like tears held in breath
sound like rock thrown at god

i am black bird i fly all nite
never tired this way
didnt know north
still dont
felt like counter clock wise circles
was no stopping
no perch might end up somebodys chicken
some greasy ass sandwich some two piece with a bisquit
I am bird not that
cuz i fly all night
soon as sun crash soon as people become they shadows
soon as skies have eyes
i fly i fly i fly
fly to your house
waiting like an uninvited omen
you not there your house empty
you not there hear door lock click
you not there
what bird you think i was
some come here tch tch tic tic tic some come here
eat seed from mouth not a kiss
not a kiss
not a kiss
rest on finger
sit on swing inside your cage inside your window
i bird
ifly
nothing that fly is ugly just wings
just air nothing that fly ugly just small swallowed by sky and god i bird
leave feet
leave hurt
leave leave
leave life leave you imma fly nothing ugly fly
imma go
find up find way up cant find it not from here
not with you cant find my lightness
cant find me
cuz you always tryin to catch me
and i always get caught
in your fist in this lie
so i go up imma bird i fly
i i i i fly

who gonna believe you now

who say
finger in our face
hell is forever
say abomination
who say laying less annointed hands on the backs of our heads
blessed like curse who say on your knees
in the name of...
in the name of...
in the name of...
who say we still yet saved
who say we cant do nothing but sing
who say we got to be silent now
who say
we forget who say
amen over us

my two left feet

when music and you close by I have to shut my eyes to remember
which one of you I'm dancing with and which one of you I'm dancing to

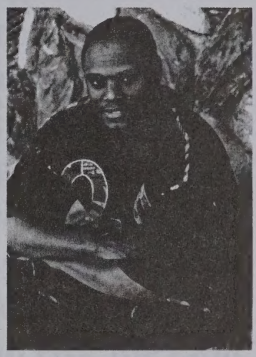
pitch

like blood let
it come up blessed
thick this ritual re-opening
of this same wound
this same ground
you return to you come from

the summer you were beautiful
so who you be now
is the only one i know
only one i love

Marvin K. White is the African American Program Coordinator of the San Francisco-based **STIOPAIDS Project.** His collection of poetry, under the title **Lyric,** is published by **GrapeVine Press.**

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE
A Recurring Theme In My Life



by Cleo Manago
INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Who do you think you are?
Loving yourself
Comfortable in your skin
Nonchalant

Who do you think you are? I mean really!
Gracing earth with your existence
Dignified, Africanesque
As if that's the way it's supposed to be

Who in Hell do you think you are?
Shouldn't you be sorry you were ever born?

You're suppose to be
Acting out
Demoralized
Submissive, Beat Down
Destroyed
Hurting others who remind you too much of yourself

You're suppose to be
Unfulfilled
Unsuccessful
Unemployed
Unimportant

Don't you know this?

I can't take it anymore
Just who do you think you are?
I mean, don't you realize you're [just] Black
A Black man?

Everyone notices when you walk in
They wonder if you're important
They think you must be somebody!
You confuse them
You confuse me!

They observe your darkness as you shine

But, I refuse to be impressed
Like me, you're just a Black person

A Black man

Just like the homeless guys in the streets
Like the pimps (so I've heard)
Like the rapers
Like the rappers
Like the muggers
Like the gang-bangers
Like O.J. Simpson
Like my Father

Still, you walk around as if you're worthy of all you survey

I wanna know now!

Who - - do you think you are?

You're suppose to linger painfully on the fringes of my mind
You're suppose to verify my self-doubt by your actions
My self-hate with your words

You're suppose to give-in to my need to think, "Well at least I'm better than him"

But you won't do it!
You're pissing me off!

Who do you think you are?

Don't walk like that! - Don't talk like that!

What are you up to anyway?

Okay, All right, OKAY! I'm sorry for hurting you

Thank you for loving yourself, for loving me

I needed to know of this
One day soon I too will arrive

Cleo Manago is the founder of the **Black Men's Xchange** and the Executive Director of **The AMASSI Center** in Inglewood, California. In 1995 Manago was the first openly same gender-loving man to address **The Nation of Islam** at their Los Angeles Temple, and in 1997 Manago made history again by convening both hetro- and homosexual members of the black community for an open forum and debate titled **Homosexuality in the Black Community.**

WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HARVEST

by G. B. Mann
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

"We are each other's harvest."
--- Nikki Giovanni

Upon first reading those words as a teen, I was intrigued. It became a riddle like the many things that I, as a child, was privileged enough to hear grown folks say when I was within earshot, things I somehow knew that I should remember because of the deeper meaning I felt was in them. Years later it would dawn on me. "Oh, *that's* what they meant by that!!!"

Nikki's poetic stanza stayed with me like the admonitions of "Mama," my grandmother. My mother's mother. Her wisdom was elegant, unadorned. In the summer, she would holler at my siblings and I for standing in the 'ice box' door. She scolded in her Louisiana creole accent, "Ain't nothin gonna jump outta dere at yew." She knew well that we liked the feeling of cool on our faces, a cool that, for a moment, gave our nostrils and eyeballs an icy reprieve from the sweltering California heat waves. Her deceptively simple words were loaded with meaning, an accelerated course in getting what you want---from life. She'd follow with, "You gon hafta reach in dere and git whut you wont." We stood staring into the frig, tempting fate, knowing what was next. "Close my [damn] Frigidaire (even though it was a Norge). You lettin out the cold." Besides the obvious meaning of her words, she was also saying that energy is valuable, and to waste it is costly. But I stray, slightly.

Nikki's "human harvest" clung to my psyche. And, years later, I was rewarded with an epiphany. If there be any such force as Mother Nature, then we humans be the fruit of her womb. Like fruit, and most living things, we begin as a seed. We ripen. We wither. We return to mother Earth.

The question then becomes what do we do between our ripening and withering is what key. That in-between period has been called many things. Spiritualist Iyanla Vanzant refers to it as "the meantime," a phrase which suggests that we are not truly living during this period, when in fact *every* moment is full of meaning and contains a joy just awaiting our recognition to experience it fully. Or, perhaps she suggests that life is a *kindergarten* before the *real thing,* and that death is our entrance into it. In the 1950s musical, JAMAICA, Lean Horne sings the Harbug and Arlen lyrics:

"Life is short, short brother (ain't it the truth). And there is no other (ain't it the truth)... You got to get yo possum (ain't it the truth) while you're still in blossom (ain't it the truth)... Cause when you're laid horizontal in that telephone booth, there'll be no breathin spells... It's only natu-rel, ain't it the gospel truth..."

I have often said to friends who believe in reincarnation and heaven, that if that state/place does exist -- great -- it's a bonus. I'll take that too, but I ain't bankin on it. Gimme mine on earth. Bob Marley sings:

"If you know what life is worth, you would get yours on earth."

The knowledge that we will one day be dust can heighten the experience of our every waking moment. As so many sages have said "the power is in the present moment." *Seize the moment*, and the day must yield to your will. But how do we seize the moment? How do we not get ahead of our selves and damn where we find our selves right now? We must locate and become aware of our *own* center, our *source*. Some locate this source outside of themselves, surrendering it to a 'higher power,' when in fact we are at one with the higher power, it is *within* us. It waits only for our acknowledgment to animate it. We are a part of it. We are it. Which brings us to *'it.'* That intangible, ever out of reach, "it."

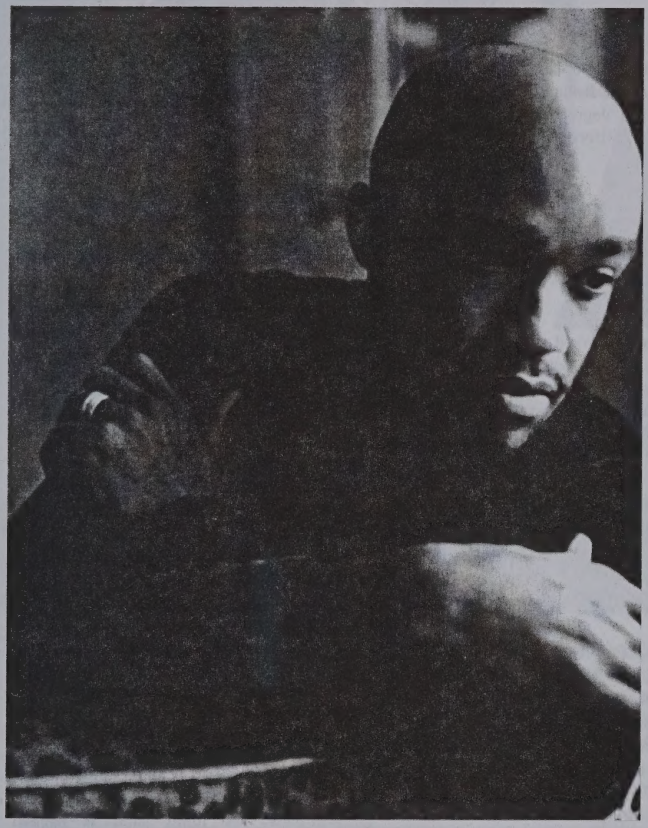
'It' is that commodity, that state of being and perfection for which we all strive, knowingly or not. This is well understood by capitalist advertisers who profit from our yearning and striving for 'it.' If we examine and ponder its messages without reacting to them, they can be effective tools in navigating us to our higher ground.

A Blue Cross Blue Shield ad shows a gorgeous, sweater-clad black man sitting on a worn sofa. He smiles and says (something like): "I've lived in this body for twenty-five years. That makes me the landlord." What a powerful statement! But again, I stray, slightly.

Advertising says "Coke is **it.**" "Just do **it.**" "**It's** the real thing." So, what is "it?" It is a force, a power that resides in each of us. Call it God. Call it The Universe. Call it Jesus, Allah or Yaweh, but call it.

That human harvest epiphany also became *flesh* in the form of my first book *--Low-Hanging Fruit.* The fruit refers, in part, to dick and ass, but it also refers to the total human being, a totality which includes the spirit force.

We can share this force, this 'it,' with each other in many ways. One of the simplest, most inti-



"In these times of media-informed living, one of the most courageous acts one can perform is to taste another's tongue. To insert oneself into another. To accept another into one's body. To dare to risk the taint of passion and lust in our lives. Life is balance, and lust, in moderation, is an ingredient in healthy living."

mate and complete ways for us to summon it, is through the sharing of our bodies in sex and affection. Love-making. Fucking. Whatever you chose to call it. It is an engagement that has lately been heaped with much shame and guilt. Politicians, experts, and nosy-motherfuckers are in our bedrooms (where they have always wanted to be), monitoring, regulating and cock-blocking.

In these times of media-informed living, one of the most courageous acts one can perform is to taste another's tongue. To insert oneself into another. To accept another into one's body. To dare to risk the taint of passion and lust in our lives.

Life is balance, and lust, in moderation, is an ingredient in healthy living. That is not to suggest that we act on every sexual impulse that comes, but that a measure of lust is healthy. Many times sex is a longing for union and affirmation.

Sex is one of the closest roads to *becoming one* that we humans have. Along with that physical merge comes a spiritual connection. Ever tried the Vulcan Mind Transfer patented by Dr. Spock? Popular spiritual thought says that the highest human experience is a personal pursuit and solo act. This philosophy sublimates our carnal desires. We are also animal. Good sex is also a ritual path to spirituality and provides a visceral experience of the human harvest.

*****

Humankind was once 'hunters and gatherers.' Our occupations today are not so different from our origins. Harvesting (gathering) is an action. Which means that we have some say in what is in our "baskets." What has our gather yielded? What will we do with this crop? What does it consist of? Friends? Family? Lovers? Is our harvest providing for our best health and well-being? Are there some greens, yellows, some oranges, reds, some leafy and some roots? Let's involve our sense, our sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste, hearts, minds and souls in appreciation and celebration of the bounty that we be.

We are each other's harvest. It is nigh time that we treat one another as the *fruit* that we are. Mother Nature insists.

GB Mann is the author of **Low-Hanging Fruit**, a collection of erotic, literature-quality short stories for black, same gender-loving men. He is also a playwright and a frequent contributor to several black lesbian and gay publications, including **SBC**.

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11]
Conference Level. The official weekend activities at the host hotel will kick off with an evening of cultural performances on Thursday June 29, followed by the Opening Reception and Kickoff Party on Friday June 30, continuing on Saturday July 1 with seminars on topics ranging from spirituality, sexuality, personal finance, health/wellness, a media reception, relationships and politics for men, women and youth. The committee on that Saturday evening, July 1 will host the Youth Dance. One of the highlights of the weekend will be the Independence 2000 Festival on Lake Michigan (Waveland Clock Tower at Irving Park Road. & North Lake Shore Drive) on Sunday July 2 with merchandise and food vendors, entertainment, recreation, music and dancing for all. All official committee hosted events are free of charge.

Chicago will also host The Taste of Chicago and a major fireworks extravaganza (Monday July 3) during this weekend. Over 10,000 brothas and sistas are expected.

For more information about planning committee activities and membership, sponsorship opportunities, vending opportunities and volunteer participation please call 773.731.8665 or e-mail them at chicagoblackpride@yahoo.com.

ADULT STAR GETS COLLEGE DEGREE

Los Angeles, California---In an industry where most people assume that wages are spent on the wages of "sin," one adult film star used his paychecks to purchase a college education. After 25 years and attendance at four different universities, 10 different colleges and numerous trade schools, Andre Bolla has been awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Bolla, 42, has been an adult model and actor for almost 15 years, appearing in dozens of magazines and over 80 films. He has also appeared in 42 mainstream motion pictures and television programs.

The Seattle native worked through the '70s at various radio stations both in front of and behind the microphone, eventually making his way to Los Angeles as a member of the Air Force. When his tours was up, he took a job as a welder installing and repairing railroad tracks. His first adult film came shortly thereafter in 1985. Most recently, Andre shot several adult-films on location in Shinjuku, Japan.

SODOMY LAW CHALLENGED IN VIRGINIA

Roanoke, Virginia---Another opportunity to chip away at the nation's remaining state sodomy laws is taking shape. The Virginia Court of Appeals agreed to look at the constitutionality of the state's law that forbids oral sex between consenting adults. The law, carrying penalies of 5-20 years imprisonment, applies to both opposite- and same-sex partners. The case before the court concerns nine men convicted for soliciting sodomy while talking to undercover police officers in Roanoke's Wasena Park.

Although all 50 states had some form of sodomy laws as recently as the 1960s, today, only 16 do. Besides Virginia, 11 others states (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Utah) have various sodomy laws on the books that cover both heterosexual and homosexual sodomy. Four states (Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas) have laws that pertain only to same-sex sodomy. Currently, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund is pursuing challenges against these laws in Arkansas and Texas.

Suzanne B. Goldberg, a Lambda staff attorney, said, "The government should not be in the business of policing the private behavior of consenting adults." She also stated that while some states do not often enforce their sodomy laws, just the law being in existence has been used to deny custody of children to lesbian and gay parents, put people at risk to lose professional licenses and deny employment. Lambda Staff Attorney Steve Scarborough said, "The willingness of the Virginia court to review the constitutionality of this law is very encouraging." For more information contact Peg Byron, Lambda Legal's director of public education, at 212-809-8585, ext. 230.

CITYSTUFF.COM A BITE OF THE APPLE

New York, New York---If you've ever been to New York and have wanted to capture some of that New York excitement and style and have it sent to you, check out Citystuff.com.

Citystuff.com specialists scour New York and other cities for unique merchandise from small, up and coming fashion designers, accessories providers and food merchants. They've narrowed your search for a distinctive gift to include items that are fun, affordable and different.

Citystuff.com launched September 1 and has already been recognized by In Style Magazine, Fortune, Your Company and Time Out New York for offering a "well-chosen" collection with items in all price ranges. Designer shirts, pants, dresses, sweatshirts and a range of New York souvenirs are all attracting attention. Only-in-New-York items such as bagels, Junior's famous flavored cheesecakes and delicious New York pizza - made on Broadway and frozen and shipped - satisfy that New York craving that we all get from time to time.

Citystuff.com plans to offer a range of products from San Francisco next, with Los Angeles and Philadelphia to be launched early next year. Of course new New York items are added to the site every week, making it worth your while to stop by regularly.

Gay Friendly Citystuff.com founders Ed Vincent and Patrick Tully are seeing a lot of their shoppers come from gay websites, including Homosexual.com, which has a link to Citystuff.com. They contacted a gay marketing agency, The Poux Company, and together created a marketing program to the gay community to capitalize on this interest. "Gay men and women are often the first people to spot trends, especially in fashion, and so attracting the gay community to our site makes perfect sense for us," says Vincent.

NEW LIGHT WITH GOD COMMUNITY CHURCH

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FEB. 6TH A TRIBUTE TO THE NEGRO SLAVES
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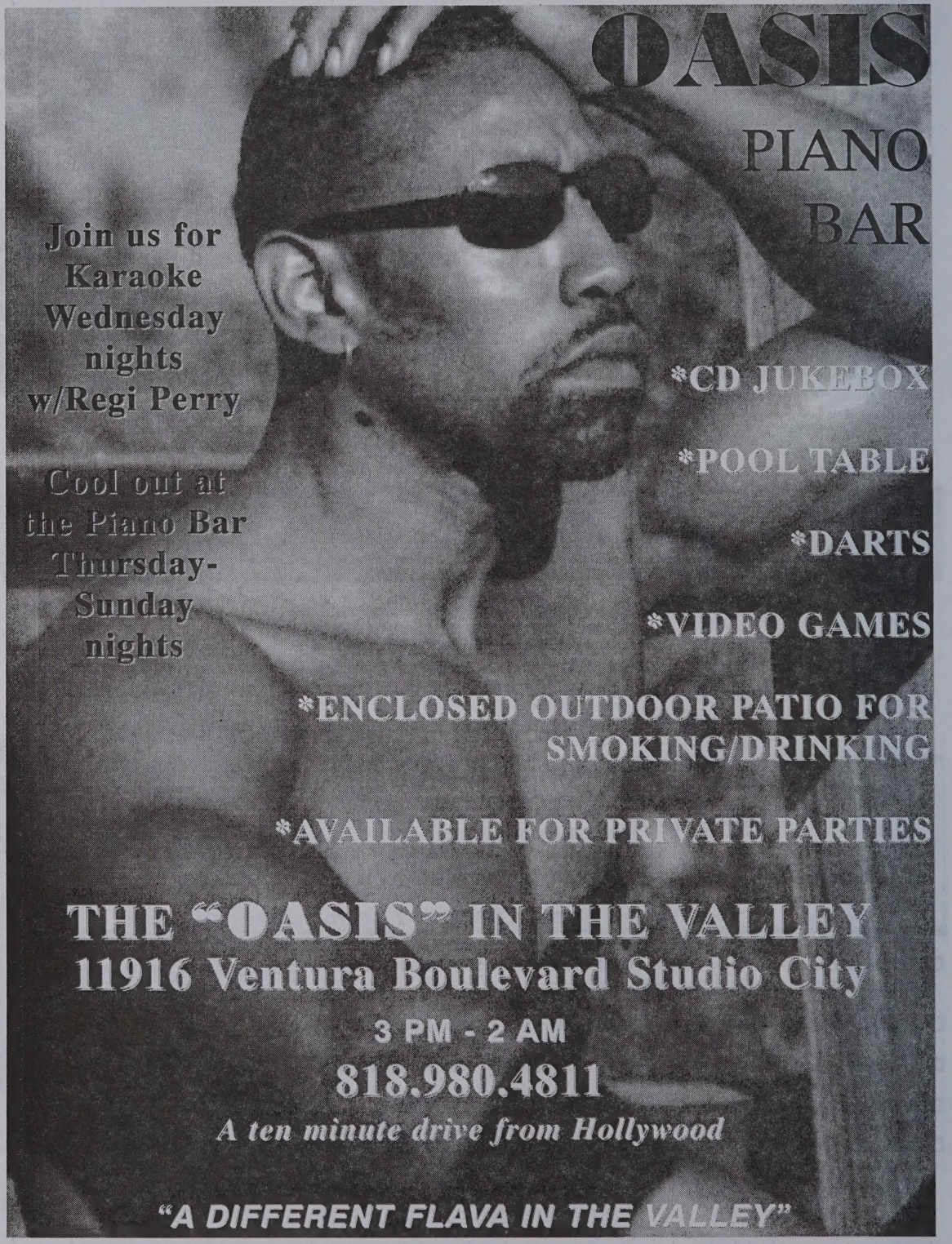
FEB. 20TH A TRIBUTE TO BAYARD RUSTIN
FEB. 27TH A TRIBUTE TO SYLVESTER

WE'RE MAKING BLACK HISTORY EVERYDAY!

Quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

- ☐ "I do not think there is any other quality so essential to success of anyking as the quality of perserverence. It overcomes almost everything, even nature."
- ☐ "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fail."
- ☐ "Success seeems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."
- ☐ "All great achievements require time."
- ☐ "At a certain point in every struggle of great importance, a moment of doubt or hesitation develops. If there is one lesson experience has taught us... It is that when you have found by the help of God a correct course, a morally sound objective, you do not equivocate, you do not retreat you struggle until you get a victory.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iN TuNe

music reviews by Erik Aston

D'ANGELO
Voodoo
(Virgin Records)

If you have only seen his steamy nude video that BET has been airing continuously, then you know damn well that D'Angelo is back (and, baby, he got back). This is not just a simple return to his music. He's back with a well oiled new muscular toned, hard bod. He's sensual, sexual and with a yearning that comes from his heart, his head, and his loins; standing naked from the hips up with just enough showing to make you walk closer to your screen (as if that would work). This has to be one of most anticipated collection in recent years. D'Angelo at long last has returned with his sophomore effort sounding more soulful than a young erotic Prince in his purple jock strap years.

In this highly anticipated follow up to his 1995 double-platinum debut, "Brown Sugar", D'Angelo resurfaces from a 5-year absence. Though pressured by the industry and by his legion of fans to rush back into the recording studio, D'Angelo stays true to his own vision and musical influences and thus far has not been tempted by the money or fame. That alone makes him an original with few peers.

This album is in classic old-school soul with funk-fueled party music such as "Devil's Pie" and the current single "Untitled (How Does It Feel"). The music is original and yet still true to the best of R&B.

"Untitled" is written by D'Angelo along with former Tony Toni Tone' lead singer Raphael Saadiq. The two have created a soulful and sexual song that can lead to a long night of lovemaking. "Feel Like Making Love", an emotional remake of Roberta Flack's all time classic is the most sensual and sexual song on the album. In a stirring duet with Grammy winner Lauren Hill, D'Angelo is at his best. Their voices fuse perfectly and often become one. This sensual pairing reminds this critic of the late Donny Hathaway and Ms. Flack. The Hill and D'Angelo coupling is worth the price of the CD alone. Interestingly and with brilliant results D'Angelo dares to enter the red hot Latin music craze with his self-penned "Spanish Joint". It groves with that must move/dance urge that only good music can do for you. My brothas.... my sistas... the drought is over. D'Angelo is home.

photo by Thierry LeGoues

photo by Herb Ritts

TINA TURNER
Twenty Four Seven
(Virgin Records)

The hardest working legs in show business are back. In celebration of her sixtieth (!) birthday, Tina Turner has released "Twenty Four Seven". These dynamic new cuts have propelled the lady full force into the new millennium. Since the turbulent 60's La Turner has been setting stages and concert halls aflame with her full and familiar throttle. Her electric wire performances have inspired many a singer---just ask Mick Jagger and The Rolling Stones, Jennifer Lopez, Brittany Spears---and her sizzling sexual presence has been the fodder of tabloids, films and books for decades. And now in the year 2000, she has not only increased her power as an artist but has maintained her musical edge.

Edge?..you question. Since girlhood Tina has always moaned gospel hymns in a full and earnest vigor. As a young woman, and partnered with ex-husband Ike and those low down Ikettes, she reinvented rhythm and blues into her own personal sexual wailing. And as a solo performer Turner miraculously transformed herself before our eyes into a rock icon. While lesser and better-voiced singers faded into obscurity or even worse...clung desperately to their past (somebody say Diana Ross and Mary Wilson). With the single exception of Cher, there are no other singers of her genre who have endured and triumph over the ever-changing musical tides and times.

Once again Turner has taken us on her personal musical journey. She sings each song as if it were a deeply claimed memory. Leaving no doubt that many of the songs were written exclusively for her. Teaming with some of the sharpest, most cutting-edge writers and producers in contemporary pop, rock and soul, Tina excels in the throbbing "When The Heartache Is Over", her current single. Joining in this collaboration are award winning producers Brian Rawling and Mark Taylor, the Metro team behind Cher's multimillion success "Believe." 'Heartache' could very well be Turner's next big hit.

"Absolutely Nothing's Changed" and "Talk To My Heart" are two outstanding production numbers that highlights Tina's vulnerability when it comes to love. Once again rocker Bryan Adams joins Tina in a rolling "Without You". Tina and her team also turned to the Bee Gees (say what?) for "I Will Be There." Turner makes every song sound important.

This CD was conceived and nurtured after Tina's dazzling performance at VH-1's Divas show last year. With her writers and producers firmly ensconced in foggy Londontown, Miss Tina (I like saying that) traveled from her home in Switzerland to record her vocals.

In a deliberate change of pace "Falling" is a simple, sad and haunting ballad; a true Tina moment used well.

Throughout this jammed packed collection of pop/rock music, synthesizers rein supreme in slick and sleek production values. The title track "Twenty Four Seven", is destined to become one of her all time standards. Though not quite on par with 'Private Dancer' this album should stand alone on it's own musical merits. "Twenty Four Seven" the CD stands in testimony to all that Tina Turner has become. It is an anthem to her ever-growing persona as, not only an artist and an icon, but quite simply a goddess.

He had lived all his young life nestled in the easiness of L.A. He was a pretty young black thing with few friends but many acquaintances. His sinful good looks, gentle manner and lip smacking physique kept firm and lean at some unknown gym and blessed darker than his natural cocoa blackness by long visits to nude beaches made him the object of sexual admiration and hallowed envy by those who proudly---and with deep innuendo---claimed to know him best.

But he maintained an inoffensive distance, and it was this aloof, free of petty
narcissism, that kept desire for him kindled in the flaming hearts and stained
panties of so many.

Yet he was easy, easy as the city of his birth, easy as the Malibu coves where he so often stretched his naked body, black as rich mahogany, pure as a naked Christ, on top of beige sand
---easy.
His own best company.

Probably.

He could spend all day in the house alone if he wanted to, looking out over the city, soaking in a tub, oiled up for masturbation in front of the mirror.

The king of cool out.

He probably didn't need the real world---he had imagination---as much as the real world needed him.

IN SEARCH OF PRETTY YOUNG BLACK MEN

a new novel
by
STANLEY BENNETT CLAY

in stores SPRING 2000

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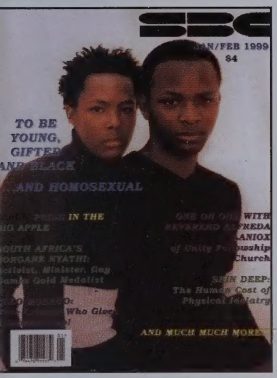

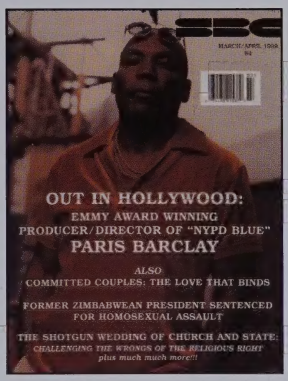

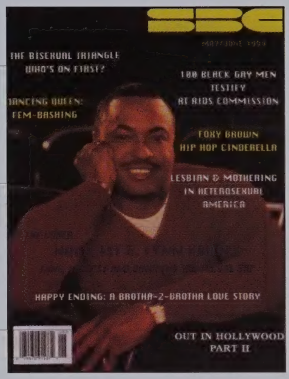

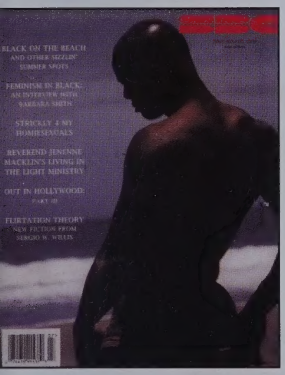

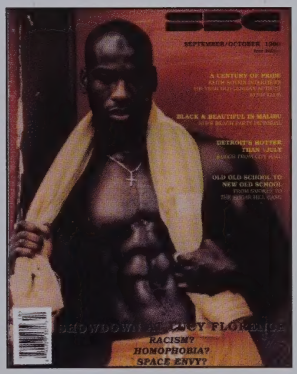

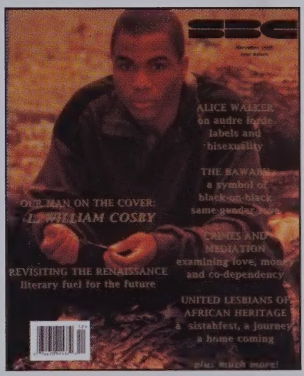

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Valerie instructed her assistant, "If Natasha calls, give her the cell phone number, but if it's some woman named Cheryl...voicemail."

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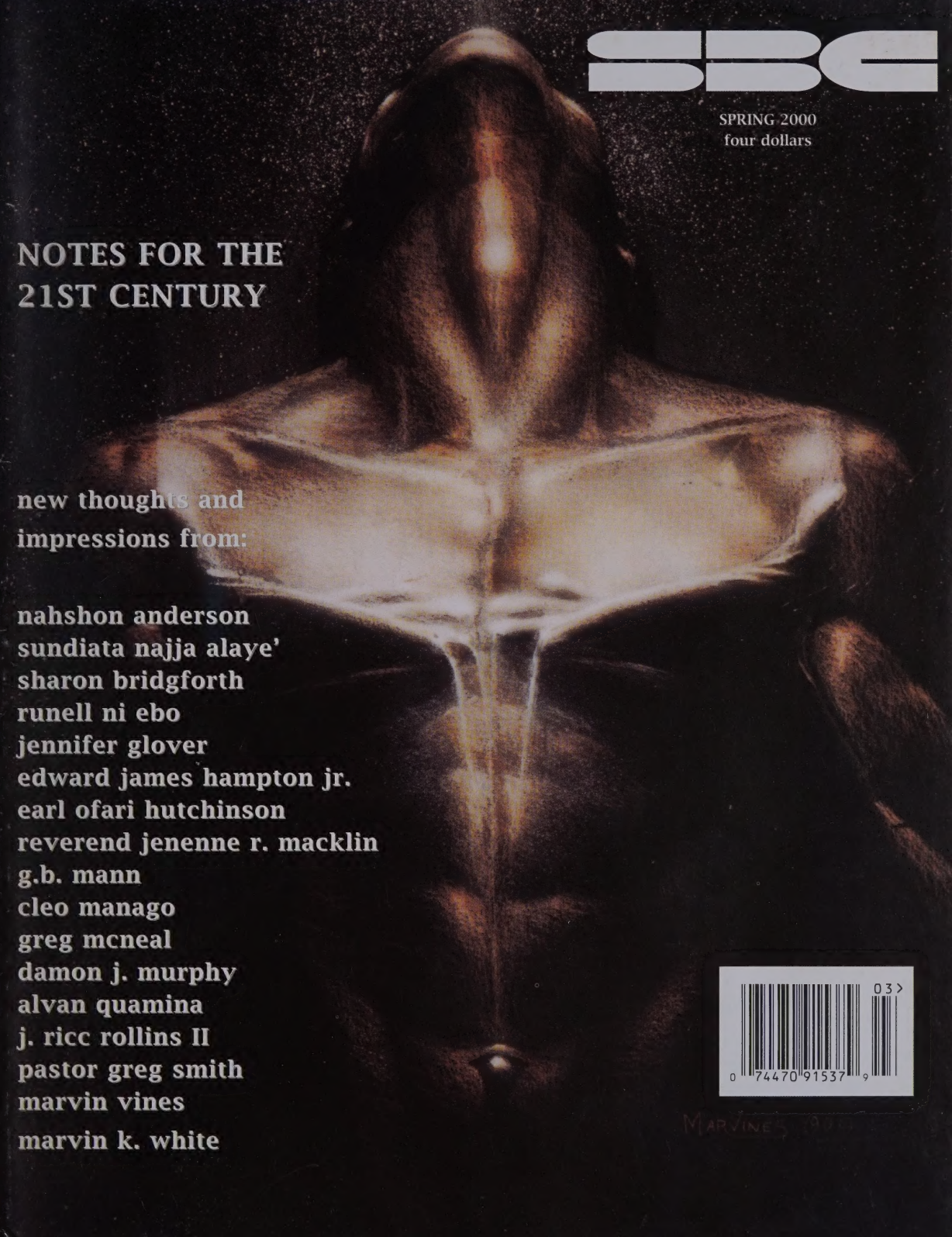

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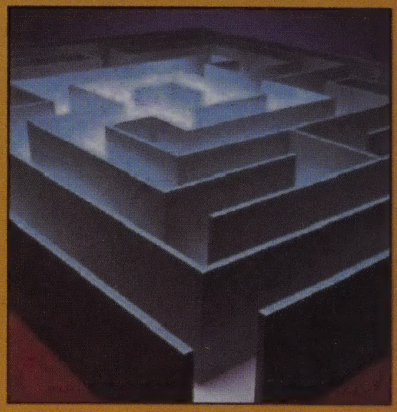
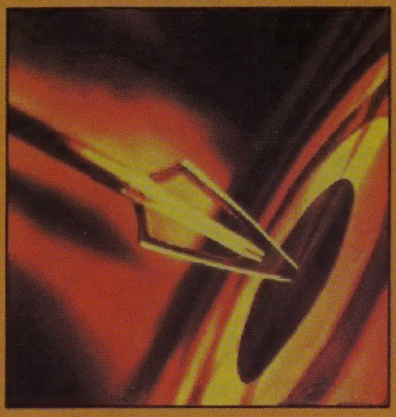
How do you get your facts about HIV treatment?

Do you get the runaround?





Or do you get to the point?

Navigating treatment options is serious business. Our skilled treatment advocates can help. If you want more information on the latest treatments for HIV, give us a call. It's good to know that you have someone on your side. We're the New Village AIDS Prevention Team, we're here for you.

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JAVA TALK

A Safe Space for Black Men Living With HIV

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SPECIAL EDITION

NOTES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

15 A Note To Myself, My Brothas & My Sistahs
PUBLISHER J. RICC ROLLINS II
Tampa, Florida

16 bull-jean & one badd case of the peacocks
NOVELIST SHARON BRIDGFORTH
Austin, Texas

20 An Open Call To The Community: Restructuring The Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum
COMMUNITY LEADER ALVAN QUAMINA
Oakland, California

25 Lend A Brother A Hand
ACTIVIST DAMON J. MURPHY
Marrietta, Georgia

26 I Am Who I Am
ARTIST MARVIN VINES
Toledo, Ohio

28 In The Midst Of My Blackness
WRITER/EDITOR JENNIFER GLOVER
Los Angeles, California

29 Build, Build, Build
PASTOR GREG SMITH
Los Angeles, California

30 Sprituality: A Call To Action
REVEREND JENENNE R. MACKLIN
Pasadena, California

32 Finding The Peace Beyond The Pain
LECTURER/FACILITATOR
SUNDIATA NAJJA ALAYE'
Memphis, Tennessee

34 My Gay Problem, Their Black Problem
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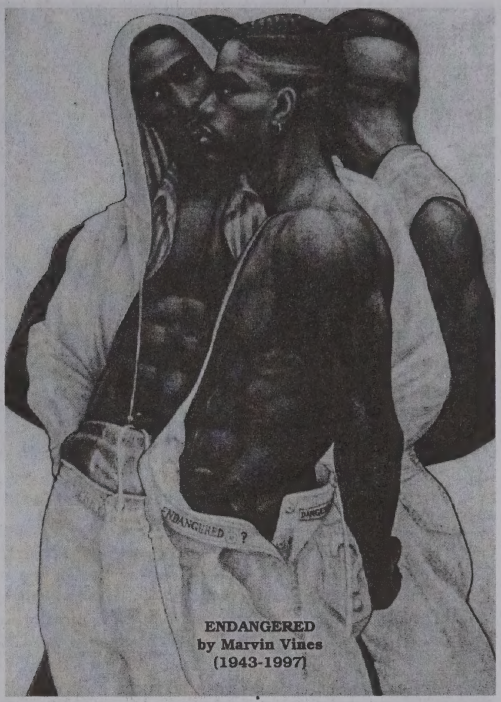
Los Angeles, California

36 A Poem For Thought
POET RU NELL NI EBO

37 If Saturn Were A Man
PHOTOGRAPHER GREG MCNEAL
Los Angeles, California



ENDANGERED
by Marvin Vines
(1943-1997)

38 I Am A Queen
YOUTH ACTIVIST NAHSHON ANDERSON
Pasadena, California

39 Mommy's Property, Daddy's Boy
PUBLISHER/EDITOR
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40 Threesome
POET MARVIN K. WHITE
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7 letters
8 411
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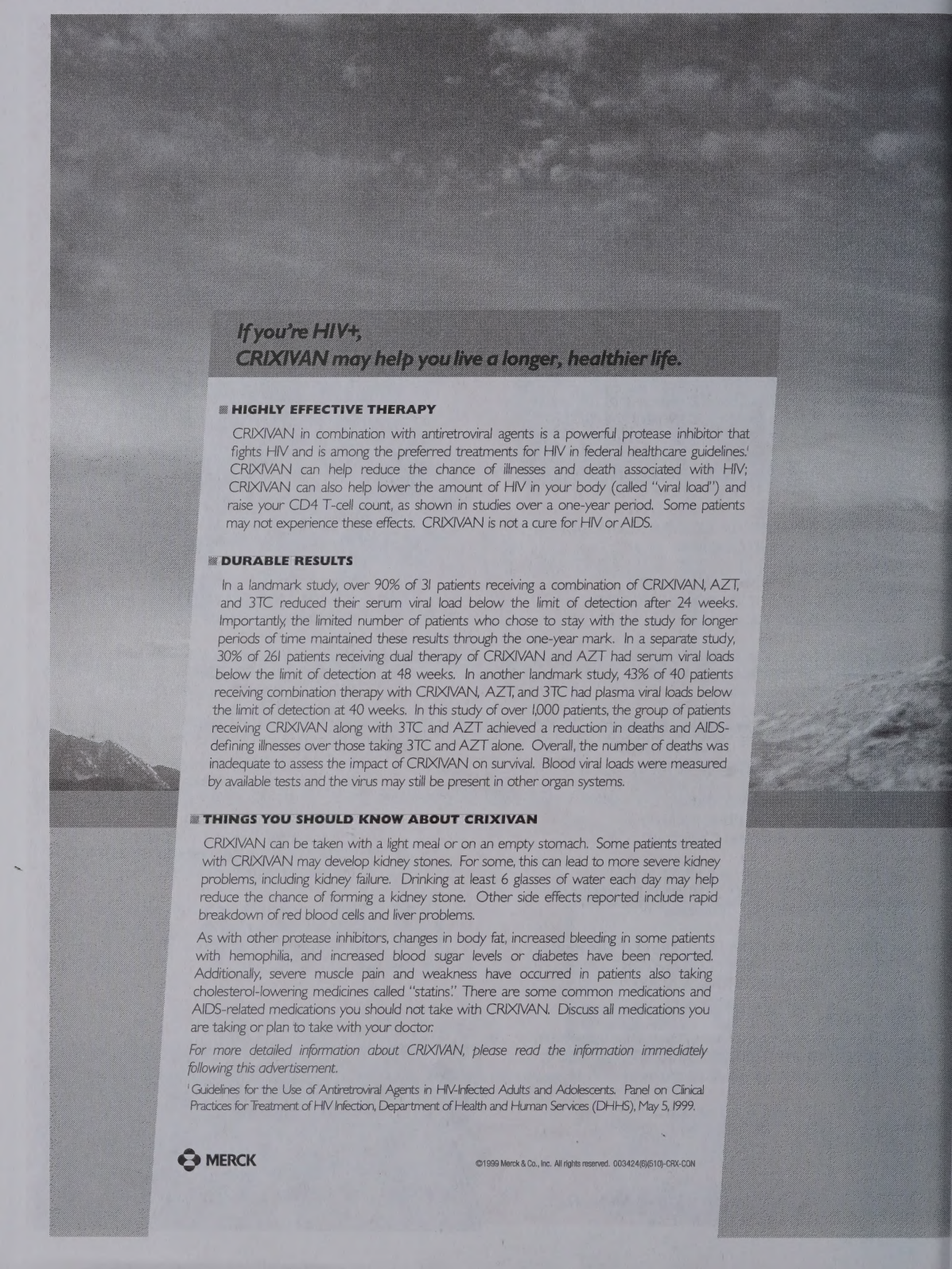
47 music reviews:
d'angelo & tina turner



If you're HIV+, CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE THERAPY

CRIXIVAN in combination with antiretroviral agents is a powerful protease inhibitor that fights HIV and is among the preferred treatments for HIV in federal healthcare guidelines.[1] CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV; CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 T-cell count, as shown in studies over a one-year period. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

DURABLE RESULTS

In a landmark study, over 90% of 31 patients receiving a combination of CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks. Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one-year mark. In a separate study, 30% of 261 patients receiving dual therapy of CRIXIVAN and AZT had serum viral loads below the limit of detection at 48 weeks. In another landmark study, 43% of 40 patients receiving combination therapy with CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC had plasma viral loads below the limit of detection at 40 weeks. In this study of over 1,000 patients, the group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. Overall, the number of deaths was inadequate to assess the impact of CRIXIVAN on survival. Blood viral loads were measured by available tests and the virus may still be present in other organ systems.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CRIXIVAN

CRIXIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems.

As with other protease inhibitors, changes in body fat, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia, and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Additionally, severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients also taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor.

For more detailed information about CRIXIVAN, please read the information immediately following this advertisement.

[1] Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV Infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), May 5, 1999.

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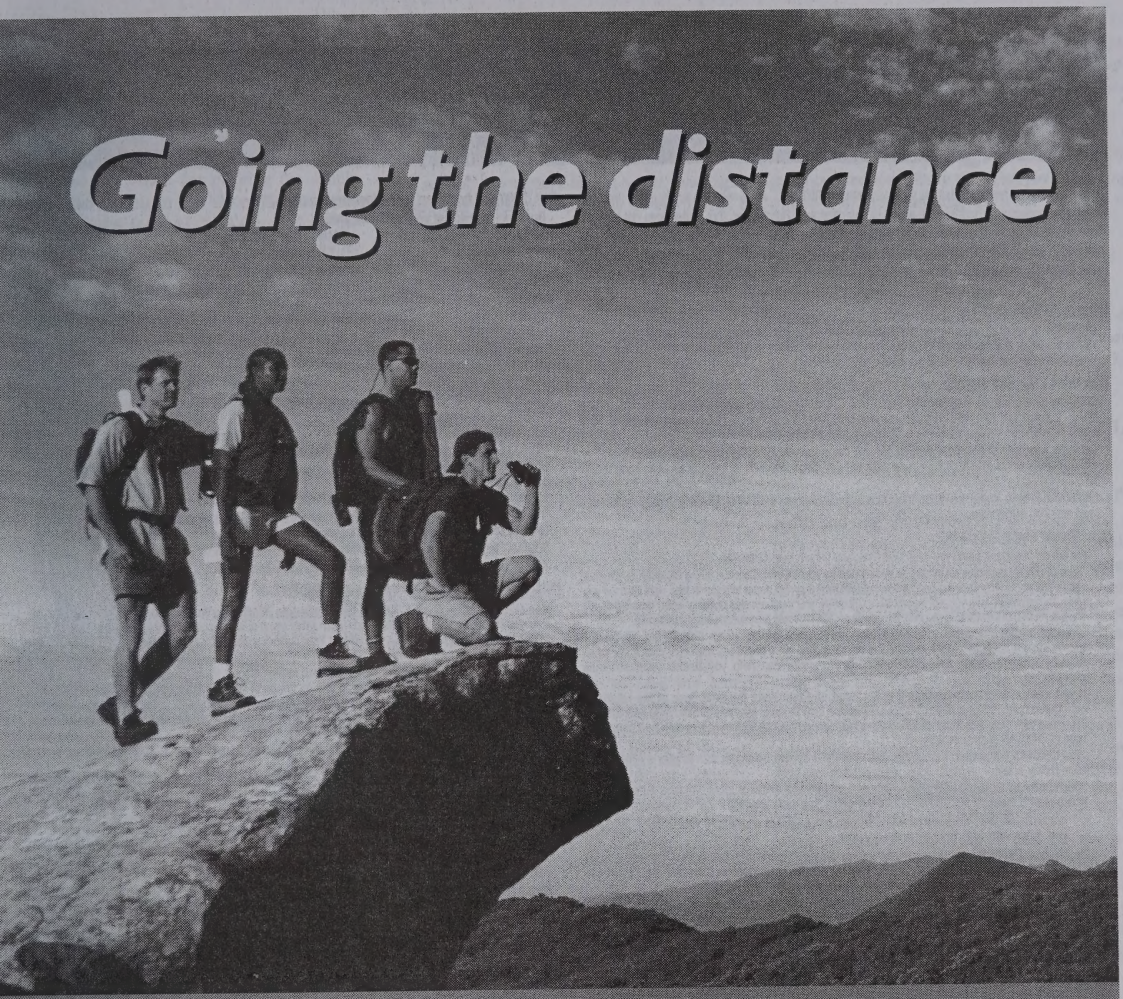
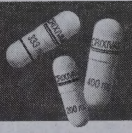
Going the distance



Remember to
ask your doctor
about CRIXIVAN.

www.crixivan.com

CRIXIVAN®
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules



CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

Patient Information about CRIXIVAN* (KRIK-sih-van)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

9024510

Please read this information before you start taking CRIXIVAN. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIXIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIXIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIXIVAN?

CRIXIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIXIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

How does CRIXIVAN work?

CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIXIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddI, ddC, or d4T. CRIXIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIXIVAN.

CRIXIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIXIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIXIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIXIVAN:

1. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor.** Continue taking CRIXIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIXIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIXIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays". If you don't take CRIXIVAN as prescribed, the activity of CRIXIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. **Take CRIXIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, *every day.*** It may be easier to remember to take CRIXIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIXIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. **If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time.** However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIXIVAN at any one time.
4. **Take CRIXIVAN with water.** You can also take CRIXIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, juice, coffee, or tea.
5. **Ideally, take each dose of CRIXIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal.** Or you can take CRIXIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:

   dry toast with jelly, juice, and coffee (with skim or non-fat milk and sugar if you want)
   corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar

   Do not take CRIXIVAN at the same time as any meals that are high in calories, fat, and protein (for example — a bacon and egg breakfast). When taken at the same time as CRIXIVAN, these foods can interfere with CRIXIVAN being absorbed into your bloodstream and may lessen its effect.
6. **It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquids (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIXIVAN can cause kidney stones.** Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIXIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIXIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIXIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses, including death, associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIXIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIXIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIXIVAN?

Do not take CRIXIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIXIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor if:

- You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIXIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIXIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
- You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIXIVAN.

Also talk to your doctor if you have:

- Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
- Problems with your kidneys.
- Diabetes
- Hemophilia
- High cholesterol and you are taking cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins".

Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

*Can CRIXIVAN be taken with other medications?***

Drugs you should not take with CRIXIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	HISMANAL® (astemizole)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALCION® (triazolam)
PROPULSID® (cisapride)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

Taking CRIXIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems (such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness).

In addition, you should not take CRIXIVAN with rifampin, known as RIFADIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIXIVAN include:

RETROVIR® (zidovudine, ZDV also called AZT)	EPIVIR™ (lamivudine, 3TC)
ZERIT® (stavudine, d4T)	isoniazid (INH)
BACTRIM®/SEPTRA® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	DIFLUCAN® (fluconazole)
BIAXIN® (clarithromycin)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	Methadone

VIDEX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIXIVAN with VIDEX®, take them at least one hour apart.

MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIXIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIXIVAN.

NIZORAL® (ketoconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with NIZORAL®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

RESCRIPTOR® (delavirdine) — If you take CRIXIVAN with RESCRIPTOR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SPORANOX® (itraconazole) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SPORANOX®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) — If you take CRIXIVAN with SUSTIVA™, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIXIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIXIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIXIVAN can cause side effects. The following is **not** a complete list of side effects reported with CRIXIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pains (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIXIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors, others did not. Some patients required adjustments to their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Severe muscle pain and weakness have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors, including CRIXIVAN, together with some of the cholesterol-lowering medicines called "statins." Call your doctor if you develop severe muscle pain or weakness.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a person may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, flank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen kidneys due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Experience

Other side effects reported since CRIXIVAN has been marketed include: allergic reactions; severe skin reactions; yellowing of the skin and/or eyes; heart problems including heart attack; abdominal swelling; indigestion; inflammation of the kidneys; inflammation of the pancreas; joint pain; depression; itching; hives; change in skin color; hair loss; ingrown toenails with or without infection; crystals in the urine; painful urination; and numbness of the mouth.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIXIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°- 86°F).
- Keep CRIXIVAN capsules dry by leaving the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.

This medication was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIXIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This leaflet provides a summary of information about CRIXIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIXIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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Issued September 1999
MERCK & CO., INC.
West Point, PA 19486, USA

MERCK

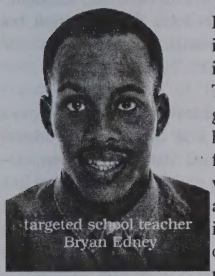
003424(6)(510)-CRX-CON

CRIXIVAN® (indinavir sulfate) Capsules

LeTTeRS

IN SUPPORT OF TEACHER BRYAN EDNEY

Thank you very much for printing the article about Bryan Edney in the December issue of SBC [Volume 8 Issue 6]. I just picked up the magazine today at the LA Gay and Lesbian Center, and I was extremely upset after reading the article ["Reporting Child Abuse Lands Homosexual Teacher In Jail"]. I know Bryan Edney, and had no idea this had happened to him. I know him from our attending the same church for a while. Many times, I was witness to his uplifting Spirit and God-given singing ability.


targeted school teacher Bryan Edney

I, too, believe in his innocence, but that is not the point. There's a much bigger issue going on here. A man was falsely imprisoned, when known and available evidence indicated that someone else was the perpetrator. His only crime was being gay and black. On top of that, his good reputation was slandered,and his vocation and income were cut off.

Unfortunately, in this year 2000, in this United States, this could have happened to any gay black man. Ignorance is rampant in many corners, and we must bring light and truth to these situations. Everyone, especially parents, should be appalled by what happened. The children were not being protected at all by those whose job it is to do so. I know that Bryan is a humble man, not an attention-seeker, but I hope that his story is sent to every news outlet in Long Beach [California], so its residents can know what kind of police force is operating there.

I hope his case is picked up by the national media, and that he gets free legal representation to sue those who have wronged him. In the meantime, I'm sending a donation and keeping him in my prayers. Please keep us updated on this story.

Kathy Fuller
Los Angeles, California

REGARDING LUCY FLORENCE AND THE HARRIS TWINS

After reading the article in the Sept/Oct 1999 issue [" Showdown at Lucy Florence: We're Black, We're Gay and We'll Not Go Away" SBC Volume 8 Issue 5] on Lucy Florence's problems with racism and homophobia, I decided to visit the coffee house last week with my Afro-Am girlfriend. She is new to LA and Long Beach where we now live, and was surprised to hear of overt racism in Hollywierd. Unfortunately, the place was closed and a new coffeehouse was taking its place. I wanted to help support the owners in that a few years ago, I had a cup of joe with my now ex-boyfriend; I found the owners, the Harrises, to be cordial and polite and likable gentlemen, and don't understand what stick is up this Elizabeth Reilly's alleged g-spot.

As for the problems with the landlords, it doesn't surprise me, considering that friends (both are gay and one is Latino, too) operated Lizards Coffee house in the early 90s and had problems, too. Considering the turnover in non-theatre businesses in that building, bad property management by the landlord must also be considered into the equation. I wish the Harris the best in their future ventures.

Thomas Provost
Long Beach California

GAY PENTACOSTALS MEET

Thank you for taking time to read my letter regarding the sensitive subject of spiritual reconciliation for gays & lesbians. My name is Robert Morgan and I pastor a church in Tampa Bay that seeks to be the open arms of Christ to all people, without distinction. Like most men who have a deep love for God but find themselves gay, I too have a dramatic story of searching & finding, loving & loosing, and accepting & winning.

Over the last few years, a movement has begun to grow among Christian gay people. Most churches that affirm gay people are very liberal in their theology. We are not.

In October of 2000, a conference of Spirit-filled, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Full Gospel gay people will assemble in Tampa Bay to celebrate the grace of God. It is that grace that helped us reconcile, the scripture and our sexuality. Secondly, we will celebrate one hundred years of Pentecostalism, as we know it today.

We are finding a ground swell of enthusiasm as more and more people find out that we exist and that there are so many of us. There are so many Pentecostal gay people who, because of the church's rejection, feel they have no other alternative than to pursue a lifestyle that often proves destructive. Those are the people we are trying to find and minister to.

My question is a simple one. With gay issues being so hot in the press, would you consider looking at what is happening among us particularly regarding to our conference coming up in October of 2000 in Tampa? No doubt, some of your readership will be surprised to learn of our existence and many that are on a very destructive course will be glad to learn of the hope we offer.

We have nothing to gain personally were you to grant our request. Only the great joy of finding others who are searching for what we have to share.

Robert Morgan
Tampa, Florida
[editor's note: contact Robert Morgan via e-mail at PoHoFellow@aol.com, via postal mail at 1200 E. McBerry St. Tampa, Florida 33603. The church phone number is 813-238-6330]

IS DATING OUTSIDE THE RACE A CULTURAL THING?

I came across your web site and thought I'd write and ask your readers for some help. I manage a gay dating service in Toronto (www.rainbowconnect.com) for men who are serious about a relationship. Most of our clientele are Caucasian, 15% are Oriental, 8% are South Asian and 4% are Black. Most of our non Caucasians tend to want to date only white men and not their own. The reasoning here eludes me. Is it just Toronto or is it like that in other major cities? One of my Black clients is a lovely young man from Jamaica (most of our Black members are from one of the islands) who only wants to date other masculine Black men BUT the rest of my Black clients do NOT want to date Black. This is making my job rather difficult in helping this young man. Is this a cultural thing, not wanting to date your own race? A few of our Chinese clients have expressed feelings of wanting to break away from dating within their culture because it is too close knit and everyone knows everyone else's business. Gossip about a being gay seems to reach "straight" Chinese ears when gay Chinese date each other. So I'm told but I'm not sure that this makes any sense. Anyway....I would appreciate any opinions or feedback especially from any Afro Canadians in the area.
Many thanks,

Len
connections@rainbowconnect.com
Toronto, Canada

We welcome your letters. When writing, please include your telephone number, which will not be printed, but is needed for verification. It is not our policy to print unverifiable, unsigned or anonymous letters. Some letters may be edited for space and/or clarity. Send letters to:
SBC Magazine
1155 4th Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90019.
e-mail us at sbcmagazine@sprintmail.com

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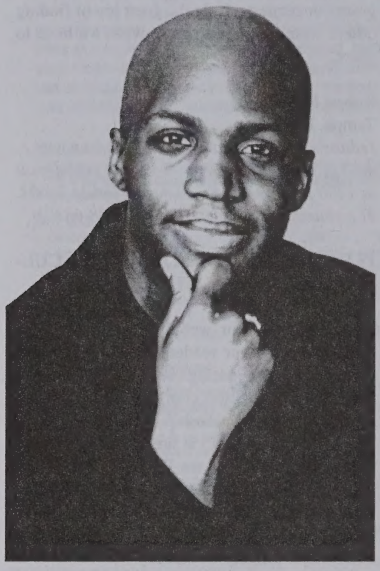
KICK MAGAZINE MERGES WITH SBC MAGAZINE



Curtis Lipscomb [pictured above] becomes new SBC Vice-President In Charge of Midwestern Operations

Detroit, Michigan---After five years of celebrating black, gay life, Detroit-based African-American magazine Kick has merged with the country's oldest Black homosexual periodical SBC.

Although negotiations remain confidential, it has been made known that Kick founder and publisher, Curtis Lipscomb, who will assume the title of Vice President of Midwestern Operations for SBC Magazine, establishing a regional office in Detroit, brings considerable Kick resources, including vital contacts, talent and contractors uniquely familiar with the vast Black lesbian and gay community in the Midwest, to the table. "In the spirit of a better industry, a unified company would only help the community," stated Lipscomb.

SBC Publishers, owner of SBC Magazine and SBC Press, will maintain its headquarters in Los Angeles, California under the direction of owner/founder Stanley Bennett Clay.

"Curtis and I go way back," stated Clay, "and we have often talked about a way to strengthen the Black homosexual press throughout the country. Kick has been a God-send in the Midwest due to Curtis' publishing expertise and familiarity with the region. SBC, coming out of L.A., has been on a mission for almost 9 years to strengthen it's national focus. That's one of the many great things Curtis and this merger have to offer."

Clay further states that distribution of SBC is currently limited to less than a thousand in the Detroit area, but plans are already underway to expand the numbers and make Detroit another major SBC distribution hub.

Although Kick Magazine merges with SBC, Kick Publishing Company will remain in operation under Lipscomb's direction with it's primary focus on Hotter Than July, Detroit's annual Black lesbian and gay celebration held in the latter part of July. Lipscomb's involvement with SBC Magazine will additionally be business administration oriented.

Details and contracts for the merger are expected to be completed by March 2000.

CIRCUMCISED MEN LESS LIKELY TO BE HIV +

by Terry Beswick

San Francisco, California---Not many guys want to have the foreskin surgically removed from their penis, at least if they are old enough to have anything to say about it. But some public health experts believe the procedure could save their lives.

A recent review of 32 studies from eight countries has revealed that men who are uncut (uncircumcised) are two to eight times more likely to be infected with the human immunodefiency virus (HIV), and in regions where circumcision is widespread, there appears to be a direct correlation with lower HIV infection rates.

Although the new report primarily surveys heterosexual men in developing countries, at least three large surveys of American men who have sex with men have reached nearly as alarming conclusions: gay and bisexual men with intact foreskins are at least twice as likely to be HIV-positive as men who are circumcised.

Biological and epidemiological evidence linking male circumcision with the virus that causes AIDS has been widely known among researchers for years. Yet policy-makers and educators have failed to direct adequate resources to inform people with the potentially life-saving information, according to the report entitled "Male Circumcision and HIV Infection: 10 Years and Counting," published in the December issue of the Lancet, a prestigious medical journal.

"The number of infections probably caused by lack of male circumcision already reaches into the millions," said the study's lead author, Daniel Halperin, Ph.D., an assistant adjunct professor of community health systems and medical anthropology at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF). "We would expect the international health community to at least consider some form of action, but male circumcision remains largely unexplored as a tool against AIDS."

Heterosexual HIV transmission is much more common in Africa and South and Southeast Asia than in the United States, and epidemiologist have observed a statistically significant link between infection rates and prevalence of male circumcision in these regions, which by far represent the greatest proportion of AIDS cases worldwide.

In West African countries, where circumcision in infancy is common, only 1 to 5 percent of the population is HIV-positive, while nearly a quarter of people in the predominately non-circumcising Eastern and Southern African nations are infected.

Scientist point to several factors that make men with uncut penises more prone to HIV infection.

"The foreskin is sort of an Achilles' heel that allows a man to be infected from a vagina or anus," Halperin stated. "It's fragile tissues---it can get torn during intercourse, and is also more susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases." Additionally, there is a higher concentration in the penile foreskin of immune system cells known as Langerhans cells than is found in the cervix, vagina or rectum; Langerhans cells are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection.

Other researchers have previously reported that "tops"---homosexual and bisexual men who are exclusively the insertive anal sexual partner---are significantly less likely to be infected with HIV than there receptive "bottom" partner.

But Halperin reported that uncut tops are more likely to be infected through contact with their partner's rectal lining, and should consider themselves at greater risk---especially if a con-

dom is not always used.

"If I were a top, and I didn't like to use condoms, I would consider getting circumcised," Halperin said. "If that person is not going to use a condom, maybe we'd all be better off if that person was circumcised." Halperin strongly emphasized that circumcision should never be considered an alternative to using condoms.

Prevailing attitudes against adult circumcision, shared by the vast majority of males throughout the world, are often attributed to religious, cultural, or sexual beliefs.

For new parents in the United States and other Western countries, the anti-circumcision bias does not always extend to their infant boys. The federal Department of Health and Human Services has reported that in recent years, about 60 percent of babies with penises are circumcised annually.

Among many homosexual and bisexual men in the United States, uncut penises are a highly coveted delicacy, and uncut men of all sexual orientations will often claim heightened sexual gratification due to their foreskins. Halperin acknowledged that there likely will be little movement among adult men, especially homosexual and bisexual men, to have their foreskins surgically removed.

"There's a huge anti-circumcision movement, particularly in the [San Francisco] Bay Area. It's a politically charged issue," Halperin said.

Indeed, Bay Area educator targeting homosexual and bisexual men with safer sex information have not focused on circumcision as a means of HIV prevention.

Tim Teeter, a treatment support specialist with the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, also does not foresee a foreskin removal fad in the gay male community, despite the increased risk of HIV infection. "Most guys who are uncircumcised are really proud of the fact that they are uncircumcised," he told the Bay Area Reporter newspaper, "so it's not a simple matter to say 'just get circumcised'"

Teeter suggested that tops consider using condoms "a much less painful option."

COURT SAYS GIULIANI IS GUILTY OF PUNISHING HOUSING WORKS

New York, New York---City officials tried to make an AIDS service group ineligible for millions of dollars in federal money because it had been critical of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a judge has ruled.

In a recent ruling, U.S. District Judge Allen Schwartz found that city officials acted with "retaliatory intent" against Housing Works, a nonprofit group that operated two homes for homeless people with AIDS, mental illness and drug addiction.

Housing Works has been a relentless critic of Giuliani's policies on AIDS. It has Blocked rush hour traffic on bridges and tunnels, interrupted news conferences of city officials and conducted sit-ins in city offices.

Housing Works claimed the administration had initially given it a favorable rating, making it likely to qualify for grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The agency awards grants through a ranking system established by the city.

Housing Works said top city officials, angered by the group's stance against the mayor, downgraded it, effectively blocking $2.4 million to cover three years of operating expenses.

Schwartz issued an injunction ordering the city to restore the original rating. Schwartz also barred the city from punishing the group for "it's criticism of the Giuliani administration or its advocacy on behalf of persons with HIV or AIDS."

The decision came less than two weeks after a federal judge found Giuliani had violated the First Amendment by withholding payments to the Brooklyn Museum of Art over an exhibit the mayor deemed offensive.

SUPPORT FOR GAY AND LESBIAN EQUALITY ON THE RISE, NGLTF POLICY INSTITUTE STUDY SHOWS

70 Percent Support Right to Serve in the Military: Half of Republicans, 74 Percent of Democrats Back Anti-Discrimination Laws

Washington D.C.---The U.S. public overwhelmingly supports equal rights and anti-discrimination protections for lesbians and gay men, and this support increased markedly during the 1990s, according to a new report on trends in public opinion released by the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. The Policy Institute of the NGLTF is a think-tank dedicated to research, policy analysis, strategy development and coalition building to advance the equality and understanding of GLBT people.

According to polling data from 1999, 70 percent of Americans support the right of gays and lesbians to serve in the military, up from 55 percent in 1992. Surprisingly, while all the Republican presidential candidates oppose anti-discrimination laws, half of Republican voters support such laws, as do 65 percent of Independents and 74 percent of Democrats.

"From Wrongs to Rights: Public Opinion on Gay and Lesbian Americans Moves Toward Equality 1973-1999," authored by Columbia University political scientist Alan Yang, reveals that American public opinion is more supportive of gays and lesbians than are most lawmakers and politicians. The report further reveals that this support for equal rights has grown despite a context of heightened anti-gay activism as well as increased organizing by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) activists to pass pro-GLBT civil rights and hate crime laws. The report tracks trends in public opinion as measured by questions and polls that ask the same question over time to national, random samples of the U.S. public.

"Presidential candidates opposing anti-discrimination protections are out of touch not only with the American electorate, but with the rank and file of their own party," said Urvashi Vaid, Director of the Policy Institute of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "The overwhelming trend in American public opinion reveals that we have more allies than foes in our struggle for basic equal rights."

Over the past two decades the GLBT community has evolved into a valued and measurable political constituency, with 5 percent of the national electorate identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (GLB) in national exit polls taken during the 1996 presidential election, and 4.2 percent identifying as GLB in the national exit polls taken during the mid-term election of 1998. Public opinion polls do not yet provide data on public attitudes towards bisexuals and transgender people, and national exit polls have asked voters to self-identify as "gay, lesbian or bisexual."

To date, 235 cities and counties and 28 states have enacted have enacted either civil rights

laws or hate crimes laws that include GLBT people. Yet there are no federal laws outlawing discrimination based upon sexual orientation in employment or other categories.

"From Wrongs to Rights 1973-1999" documents increased support for gay and lesbian equality in several areas:

****Today, 83 percent support equal rights in employment and 75 percent support equal rights in housing.

****In 1996, 68 percent of women and 72 percent of African-Americans supported anti-discrimination laws for gay men and lesbians. Data reveal that women are consistently more supportive of anti-discrimination laws than men (an average of 65 percent of women supported anti-discrimination laws in four surveys from 1988 to 1996, versus 55 percent of men), and African-Americans are consistently more supportive of equal employment rights than white Americans (an average of 68 percent of blacks vs. 60 percent of whites in four surveys from 1988 to 1996).

****In 1998, 55 percent of those surveyed reported having a gay friend or acquaintance, up from 43 percent in 1994 and 24 percent in 1983. Such data correlates with increasing support for GLBT rights, supporting the conclusion that greater knowledge of openly gay or lesbian people fosters greater tolerance and support for equal rights laws.

****As familiarity with openly gay and lesbian people has increased, disapproval of same-sex relations has consistently declined since the early 1990s. Gallup reports a drop in disapproval from 57 percent in 1992 to 46 percent in 1999. The National Opinion Research Center tracks a decline in disapproval from 73 percent in 1990 to 58 percent in 1998.

****61 percent of Americans supported the hiring of gay and lesbian high school teachers in 1999, up from 27 percent in 1977. In 1997, 63 percent said school boards shouldn't be able to fire a teacher because he or she is gay.

****75 percent support the hiring of gay and lesbian doctors in 1999, up from 53 percent in 1992 and 44 percent in 1977.

****57 percent of self-described conservatives supported the right of gays and lesbians to serve in the military, as did 70 percent of moderates and 91 percent of liberals, according to a 1996 National Election Study. In 1999 70 percent of all respondents told Gallup that they supported gays and lesbians serving in the armed forces, up from 55 percent in a National Election Study poll in 1992. This sharp increase in support occurred against the backdrop of increased purges of homosexual service members since the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was adopted in 1993. Discharges for homosexuality increased 86 percent from 1993 to 1998, according to the Service members Legal Defense Network.

****Solid majorities support Social Security benefits for the same-sex partners of gay and lesbian people, as well as inheritance rights for same-sex spouses.

The Yang study also documents lower levels of support for the rights of gay and lesbian couples to marry and adopt children. Less than one-third of respondents support the right to civil marriage for same-sex couples, according to two 1998 polls (29 percent and 33 percent). And only 36 percent support the right of same-sex couples to adopt children. Put into context, Vaid noted, these results are not that surprising. "Same-sex marriage and same-sex couples adopting children are issues new to the public's consciousness, just as openly gay people teaching or being doctors were new concepts 20 years ago. Over time, there is every reason to believe that this trend will change and that support for gay adoptive parents and for the rights of same-sex couples will continue to increase."

Vaid cited the fact that same-sex unions are allowed by several European countries as a sign that governments internationally are changing their policies. "The marriage issue is one that will be with us [for many years to come] and one that is of critical importance to many GLBT people," Vaid said. "We believe that public opinion will change as the debate continues."

WINDY CITY TIMES ANNOUNCES NEW MINORITY STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Chicago, Illinois---Looking to a future when more minority and new immigrant students will be entering Chicago-area colleges and universities, Windy City Times announces the formation of a journalism scholarship program designed to benefit GLBT minority students in pursuit of media careers.

All applicants must be pursuing a journalism degree on an undergraduate or graduate level in the Chicago metropolitan area. Two scholarships will be given annually, with the recipients announced in May for the Fall 2000 term. Applications must be received by Windy City Times no later than April 1, 2000 to qualify. Each award will be in the amount of $1500.

In announcing the new program, Publisher Jeffrey E. McCourt said, "The face of journalism is forever changing. Today, the gay and lesbian press is reaching a wider, more diverse audience. Therefore, our newspapers and media outlets must take the necessary steps to ensure that everyone with talent and interest can be a part of this dynamic profession. To date, not enough has been done to foster interest in potential young writers, particularly minorities. Hopefully, this program will be a small step in the right direction by offering economic incentives to young people with talent and economic need. Publishing must continually move forward and it must do so with more diverse voices."

The Windy City Times Scholarships will be given by members of the newspaper's editorial department, as well as selected local journalists. Applicants for the Fall 2000 scholarship should send a short introductory essay (no longer than 1000 words), up to four examples of their work, a transcript and a resume to WCT-Scholarships, 325 West Huron, Suite 510, Chicago IL 60610. All applicants should also include complete contact information. Scholarship recipients will be announced in mid-May.

LGBTQ MUSLIMS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR INTERNATIONAL GATHERING IN 2000

New York, New York---The Al-Fatiha Foundation, an international organization dedicated to Muslims who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and their friends, announced today its plans for an international gathering to be held in London, England, in May of 2000.

Following meetings held between Al-Fatiha representatives and local LGBTQ Muslims, community members in London agreed to host

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Al-Fatiha's Second International Retreat. The Second International Retreat for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning Muslims and their Friends is tentatively planned to be held from May 26 – 29, 2000.

In announcing the retreat, Faisal Alam, the Founder & Director of the Al-Fatiha Foundation said that, "this international gathering will bring together Muslims from around the world who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) in a safe and spiritual environment, where they can discuss issues important to the community."

The Second International Retreat for LGBTQ Muslims & Friends will be the first time that Al-Fatiha has sponsored an event outside of the United States and Canada.

"Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning Muslims abandon Islam because they cannot reconcile their religion with their sexual orientation or gender identity. We hope that by meeting other LGBTQ Muslims and by sharing individual experiences, people can begin to understand that these two important identities are not exclusive to one another." said Faisal Alam.

The Al-Fatiha Foundation also announced that UNISON, the United Kingdom's largest trade union for the public sector, passed a resolution endorsing Al-Fatiha and its upcoming retreat in London. The resolution was submitted by the National Black Lesbian and Gay Members Caucus and passed by UNISON's National Lesbian and Gay Conference to support Al-Fatiha and its activities.

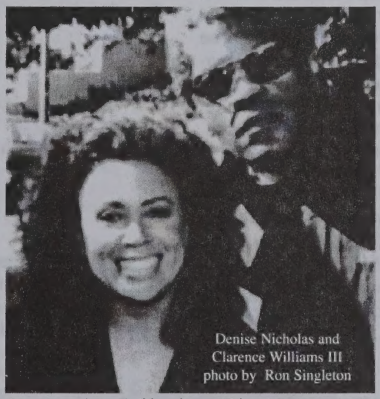
"This endorsement is historic for our community, because it recognizes the importance of our work and the struggle that lays ahead," said Faisal Alam. UNISON will work with the Al-Fatiha Foundation in providing logistical and technical support in organizing the retreat.

The Al-Fatiha Foundation was formed in October of 1998 at the First International Retreat for LGBTQ Muslims & Friends, held in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. More than thirty participants gathered from four countries representing thirteen nationalities and ethnicities. In May of 1999, the Al-Fatiha Foundation held its First North American Conference in New York City, New York, USA. More than sixty participants came together and participated in fifteen workshops and five plenary sessions. Workshop and plenary session topics included: HIV/AIDS in the Muslim community; Coming Out to Muslim families; Human Rights and LGBTQ Muslims; The Quran and Homosexuality; and Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues and Islam.

Since Al-Fatiha's formation more than six cities across North America have held social events, including Atlanta, Boston, New York, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and Washington DC. A group of local community members has been formed to organize the logistics of the retreat in London. Meetings will be held in the coming months and details of the retreat will be announced. For more information , please go to: http://www.al-fatiha.org/mlists.html or http://www.egroups.com/list/al-fatiha-news.

For more information about the Al-Fatiha Foundation, contact them at 212.752.3188, or write them at 405 Park Avenue Suite 1500/ New York, New York 10022. Their email address is: gaymulsims@yahoo.com and the website address is: http://www.al-fatiha.org

SBC'S FEATURE FILM 'RITUAL' SCREENS AT PAN AFRICAN FILM FEST



Denise Nicholas and Clarence Williams III photo by Ron Singleton

Los Angeles, California--- "Ritual", the controversial film written and directed by Stanley Bennett Clay, based on his award-winning stage play, will screen at the 8th Annual Pan African Film & Arts Festival Saturday, February 19th at 9 PM and Monday, February 21st at 8:20 PM.

"Ritual", which stars Clarence Williams III and Denise Nicholas, is the story of a wealthy African American attorney living in Malibu who seems oblivious to his wife's growing alcoholism, prompted by a conniving daughter who seeks to usurp her mother's position in the kitchen and in the bedroom. Because of this, the brilliant homosexual son, drops out of his Ivy League college and comes home to save his family in a most shocking way.

This year's festival, hosted by CCH Pounder, will run from February 10th through the 21st, and will feature an array of films from the African diaspora, featuring such actors as Courtney B. Vance, Regina King, Ed Asner, Kathleen Turner, Omar Epps, Alfre Woodard, Debbi Morgan and Forest Whitaker, to name a few.

All screenings will be held at the Magic Johnson Theatres in Los Angeles, 3650 Martin Luther King Jr. Bl. in the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza. Tickets for regular screenings are $4.95 (matinees, seniors and children) and $7.75 (adults).

For more information and festival itinerary call 213.896.8221 or 323.295.1706. For online information check www.PAFF.org.

INDEPENDENCE 2000: CHICAGO PLANS 2ND ANNUAL BLACK PRIDE CELEBRATION FOR JUNE 29 - JULY 3, 2000

Chicago, Illinois---Chicago will host it's second annual Black Pride Festival, "Independence 2000", over the 4th of July weekend, June 29 through July 3. This weekend is an annual gathering celebrating the Black Lesbian, Gay, Bi-affectionate and Transgender community in the Windy City. Independence '99 was enjoyed by several thousand brothas and sistas and was a vast success. The theme for the 2000 event is "An Explosion of Heritage". Independence 2000 will feature activities for the entire Black LesBiGayTrans community including live performances, cultural events, seminars and a lakefront festival. Evening activities will include parties hosted by various social organizations and bars/clubs from the community.

The official host hotel is the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place, 2233 S. Martin Luther King Drive (downtown Chicago). Reservations can be made at 312.567.1234 or Toll Free at 800.233.1234. Ask for the Chocolate City/The Rails/Chicago Black Pride rate. The official Chicago Black Pride Committee Information desk will be located at the hotel on the 2nd floor

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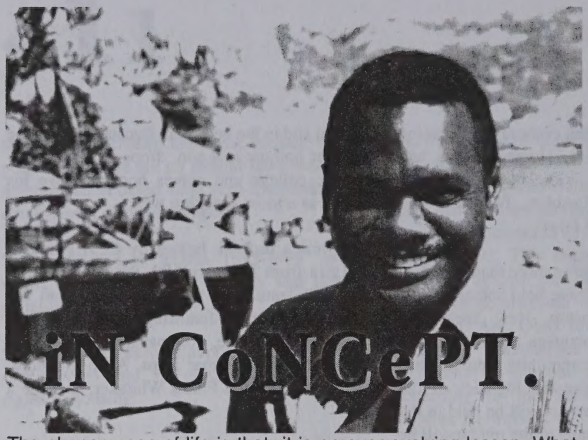

The phenomenon of life is that it is an ever evolving lesson. What we bring from the last century, shall serve us well in the new one. The problems of the past urge forth solutions, while yesterday's pleasures are worth repeating and improving and expanding upon.

Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our infant past, before we knew peer pressure and prejudice and societal pain. Before the first time someone called us faggot, sissy, dyke, nigger, wetback, honky, chink, fatso, bitch. When we believed the world shared our innocence and newborn goodness. Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our present, and our presence. Knowing that we exist by the grace of A Greater Power all around us and deep inside us, and that we are the marvelous manifestation of That Greater Power and that each moment is a gift from That Greater Power, a gift meant to be shared. Loving ourselves and our God-designed skin, loving ourselves and our God-designed nature, loving ourselves and our God-designed godness, is the simple acceptance of our future. Improvement lies ahead. Betterment lies ahead. Deeper love, through deeper understanding, lies ahead. The future, by nature, is always bright.

And so, for us here at SBC, it is only fitting that our first issue of the 21st century should be filled with the words, visual expressions, opinions and counsel of a diverse group of Africentric homosexual men and women, their gifts, their Notes for the 21st Century, if you will, their helpful lessons from their past, meditations on their present, admonitions for the future, shared freely, lovingly. Drum beats sent forth, calls awaiting response.

The Notes for the 21st Century contained within these pages are just that. Notes. And the note taking will never stop. Even when the time comes for us to make that transition to a higher or lower or different ground, our lives on earth shall be noted in the lesson plans of others to follow. Our triumphs and our mistakes will teach and educate long after we are gone. Our words and our pictures, from the most humble of us to the most visible of us, must continue to speak of, by and for us.

It is a marvelous purpose we have. Each life is a lesson for all lives to come.

Stanley Bennett Clay

SBC

The Africentric Homosexual Magazine
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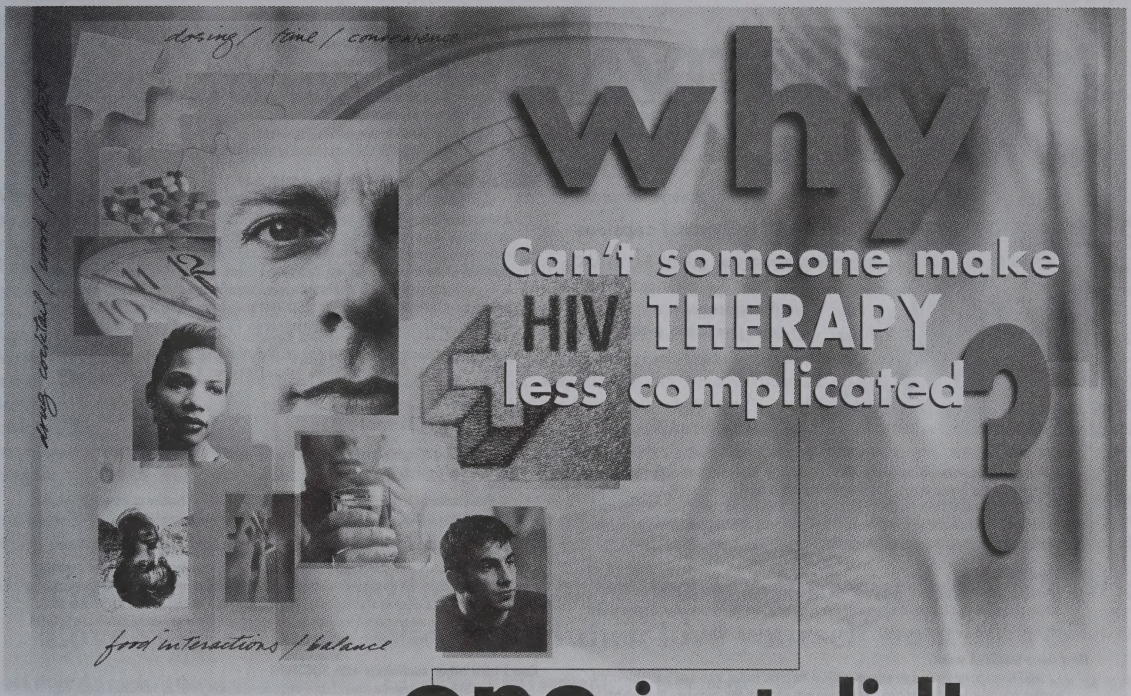
Resurection
by MARVIN VINES (1943-1997)



someONE just did!

Once Daily
SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ is the first HIV drug approved to be taken once-a-day as part of your combination therapy. Just take three 200 mg capsules together once daily, with or without food; high fat meals should be avoided. Your doctor may suggest taking SUSTIVA at bedtime to reduce any side effects you may experience.

SUSTIVA, an NNRTI*, must be used in combination with other HIV drugs.

SUSTIVA is tough on HIV. It reduces the amount of virus in your blood and increases the number of CD4 cells. SUSTIVA can even be used in young children, 3 years of age or older. This is based on results from controlled clinical trials at 24 weeks. Presently, there are no results from controlled clinical trials showing the long-term effects of SUSTIVA.

Now listed among preferred anti-HIV drugs in government guidelines.[1]

SUSTIVA has manageable side effects. Most side effects are mild to moderate and can be managed. The most significant side effects associated with SUSTIVA therapy have been nervous system symptoms (dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating and/or abnormal dreams) and rash. These usually subside within the first two to four weeks of treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. Taking SUSTIVA at bedtime may help make nervous system symptoms less noticeable.

*NNRTI - non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor.

For more information on SUSTIVA, call 1-800-4PHARMA or visit our website at http://www.sustiva.com
For more information on the updated DHHS Guidelines, a PDF file of the guidelines is available at http://www.hivatis.org

Pregnancy should be avoided in women receiving SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in primates dosed with SUSTIVA. Barrier contraception should always be used in combination with other methods of contraception.

Talk to your doctor when you start taking SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Always tell your doctor if you are taking, starting or changing any prescription or non-prescription medicine when taking SUSTIVA. Your doctor may change your medicines or change their dose. You should discuss your prior medical conditions (such as mental illness, substance abuse, hepatitis, etc.) with your doctor before taking SUSTIVA.

We know that coping with HIV is difficult enough. Your treatment doesn't have to be. Ask your doctor about SUSTIVA. For more important information see the next page for Patient Information about SUSTIVA.

FOR HIV

Finally, a once daily medication to treat HIV.

SUSTIVA. It's about time.

www.sustiva.com

1. Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents. Panel on Clinical Practices for Treatment of HIV infection, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), December 1998.

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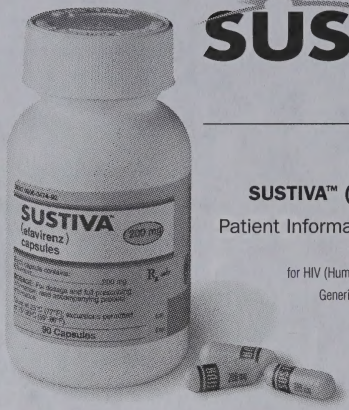

SUSTIVA™
efavirenz

SUSTIVA™ (efavirenz) capsules

Patient Information about SUSTIVA*

(sus-TEE-vah)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection

Generic name: efavirenz (eh-FAH-vih-rehnz)

Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?

SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?

SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?

- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?

Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?

Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

Talk to your doctor right away if you:

- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA (efavirenz)
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. Rarely, patients have more serious side effects that may affect mood or ability to think clearly. These side effects occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness or substance abuse. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?

Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:

- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA:**

- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA:**

- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?

SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?

Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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DuPont Pharmaceuticals
Wilmington, DE 19880
Issued September, 1998

A NOTE TO MYSELF, MY BROTHAS & MY SISTAHS

by J. Ricc Rollins II
TAMPA. FLORIDA

When I received this invitation to share my thoughts on this new century from the publishers of SBC, I was both honored and humbled. Humbled, because a year ago, when I embarked upon this journey, I had no idea of its destination, if any at all. Along the way I had the privilege of meeting so many wonderful people. People who shared in the vision that was conceived when I decided to publish Like Breathing. People who(m) I now proudly and fondly call my friends. I now understand the meaning of the saying "...I wouldn't take anything for my journey."

And indeed it is an honor and privilege, because of the prestigious and note worthy company that I share the pages of this month's issue with. Dually honored, because someone actually wanted to me share a few of my thoughts.

As I speak around the country I find myself sharing the importance of truth especially to oneself and to those whom we deem important in our lives. As an ordained minister, I depend on scripture and other inspirational text for strength and motivation on the journey. One scripture that many of you have heard me share is John 8:32"... and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set/make you free." And I think I speak for everyone reading when I say "free is the way to be,"especially if you want to be happy. Now I'm not saying to you that you have to come out to your family, friends, co-workers or fellow parishioners, but I will tell you that there is a certain unimaginable freedom in living in your truth. And might I add that if you're not "out" to anyone else, I would hope that you're out to yourself. I think that Ralph Ellison said it best, "...when I discover who I am I'll be free." There is something so liberating in knowing who you are, not who you think you are or who others perceive you to be, but the real deal, the you that is true, the.... well you get the drift. There is nothing sadder than someone shopping for condos in Cleopatra's neighborhood, you know it-D'nile. No one else need know your business, but you owe it to yourself to mind your own business as you are your own business. And no one can run it like you. You know the quirks, the nuances and the short comings. And you know what needs to be worked on.

So what will you do in the new century that you didn't do in the last? Some of us will make promises that we won't keep, resolve to do this or that and that's about as far as we will get. How about not making any resolutions or promises? Rather, why not simply breathe. Yeah, breathe! Let the chips fall where they may and be a better you everyday. Take time to appreciate you and love you, before you enter into anyone else's space. If you aren't happy with you, then how can you be happy with anyone else? Please don't tell me that you've been looking to others to do that for you. Baby, that's the problem. It ain't gonna happen. Nope, never will. No one can fill the void that you have created for yourself but YOU! Love yourself, like yourself and then love yourself some more.

"No one can fill the void that you have created for yourself but YOU! Love yourself, like yourself and then love yourself some more."

Recently, I had the privilege of speaking at a retreat sponsored by Brothers United, Tennessee Network. I shared with the brothers in both my workshop on Friday evening and my sermon on Sunday two key point. One that every breath is precious and secondly that it's time that we start packing light. As we enter this new century, we can't travel the journey the same way we did in the last. It's time to run this race with the determination that you're in it to win it! We can't let the oppression of a homophobic black community and oft times a racist white gay community hold us back. We have to forge ahead letting nothing get in our way. I would love to believe that we have made major strides in our communities, but let the record speak for itself. The record clearly states that there is much work to be done. But by who and what for?

I'm glad you asked. We owe it to those who have come before us to keep their work and vision alive. No more blaming "the man" nor our dysfunctional families, but let's start with us. Yep, you and me. President Kennedy once stated, "...ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country..." When was the last time you asked and did you respond to the answer with a willing attitude or was your heart and soul bursting with apathy? We have no one to blame for where we are but ourselves. Can you honestly say that you (or I) have really made a conscious effort to assist in the tearing down of racial and social barriers. Really and truly? Honestly? If you have, I salute you my brotha or sistah! If not, then rather than scold you (us) I would rather encourage you (us) to begin making little differences that will eventually lead to big changes. In ourselves, in our cities and towns, our country and, yes, even in our world.

At this writing, the clock ticks away and we are one millisecond closer to the dawning of a new day, I close this note by sharing my formula for "breathing". After all, breathing begins with a single breath:

Be true to yourself, by being faithful to your true self...
Respect yourself and remind yourself why you deserve that respect...
Expect nothing from others that you don't expect from yourself...
Acknowledge the you that is, anticipating the you that is yet to be...
Take time for you, treating yourself the way you want to be treated...
Honor your greater self by giving honor, thanks and praise to the Creator of your greater self.

As we embark upon this new decade in this new century, let these not be the only things new to our lives. How about a new attitude, a new outlook , a new sense of community awareness and a new hope that tomorrow will be better because each of us are doing our part to make this world a better place not only for ourselves but others who reside on the planet with us.

And lastly, a renewed Spirit . Baby, breathe and be! Loving the you that is and the you that is yet to be!

J. Ricc Rollins II is the author of two novels, **Like Breathing** and **Breathe Again**. Along with his life partner, Lorenzo Robertson, he is the owner of the Tampa, Florida-based publishing house **Ishai Books.**

bull-jean
&
one badd case of the peacocks

by sharon bridgforth
austin, texas

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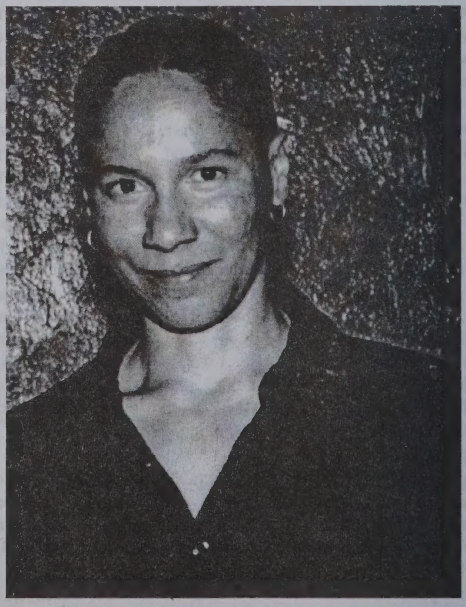
na/see what had happened was
we was over to binky cousin maymay's house making groceries for binky granny
till we had to go by olesirus
    that's maymay's ex you know
and maymay found olesirus laid up with some wo'mn
    which meant maymay couldn't just get what she come for/she had to
    handle a few things first
and what had happened was
me and bull-jean was sitting on olesirus porch/waiting for maymay
when next thing we know
the neighbor woman
just come up and jsit on po bull-jean's lap
till binky granny's great granbaby/sticka
run up panting
my gran-mawmaw want she groceries
my gran-mawmaw want she groceries!
and maymay come/out see the neighbor woman sitting on bull-jean's lap/start to yelling
you low-down cheating dog
don't
you
think
for
one minute i ain't fixnta tell it/you
mangy
thing
you
sticka still panting/maymay carrying on and on
till they both spin off
and direct to tell it.

na/see
but the truth is
the whole time the neighbor woman was winking at me/cause it were
my lap
she was really trying to get on

and/that
is what
really
had happened.

that's milo buford
who we all know is a fool what i can't figure out is
why
bull-jean is running with her
and worsa
why she letn her speak/at this very sensitive moment.



Sharon Bridgforth photo
by Pat Hendricks

course/na i thought bull-jean had long retired her fool ways
parently
not.

i am sorry.
for the times i did not notice your feelings.
the feelings i didn't admit i had.
for the arguments i could have avoided by looking at my actions
instead of yours.
for the many ways that i have been selfish and insensitive i am sorry.
for the flowers i walked past and did not pick for you
for the times i have neglected to give you a simple smile i am sorry/that your heart has
been broken from loving me/that you had to wonder if i'd ever love you as completely
as you love me for all the times i have wasted time when i could have been loving you
better i am sorry/please
forgive me give me another chance
baby!

ole bull-jean/trying to get let back in.
yessuh/cause
bull-jean and mina
got what you calls a badd case of the peacocks.
course/na the peacocks is when you with somebody you love dearly/and
you be so beautiful you wear your feathers fanning all the time
and things is good and you is glorious and life is fine

till
you can't hold them feathers up no mo
and they gets to dropping one by one
till
the only thing fanning be that funky bare ass
yessuh
and with all that ole nasty dirty shit showing
ain't no way to be pretty
no mo.

yessuh
bull-jean had done dropped all she feathers.

sun go down
chill come in
lights go off
bull-jean/still on the porch
look
so
sad

then i hear mina say
you can stay out there if you want to but ain't nobody said you can't come in the house.

i try to warn bull-jean
that ain't no friendly invite
but she
quick
in the house.
mina
for a long time
silent.
then say
umph

mina stare/looking
watch bull-jean till bull-jean reach for a kiss
mina/watching bull-jean
say

i know you didn't kiss that woman or hold her close .
and i know you didn't invite her on your lap

but you might as well have

cause bout time you finish acting like you don't know what's going on
and time you finish playing like milo the bad one/and you just hanging around
and time you finish
not noticing
what your own head is thinking/next time

the bitch gone just stick her pussy in your face

and then it's gone be too late

bull-jean sit still/frozen
like if she quiet enough she be invisible till it all pass
mina say
you say all them pretty things
and you make all them precious promises
but you ain't got a clue about how to make your fancy talk walk real with me

the truth is/you don't want to cause
you got a place in your mind where you keeps a bag packed
which mean
part of you has always been ready to leave
which mean
i can't plan a life-time with you/cause you ain't never completely here.

so today
all what you have said to me before
don't
mean
nothing

ooh/them last words twist bull-jean up real bad
but mina ain't done/say
if you want

you can take your dog
and your sack of clothes
and go on back to that empty house that you moved here from

cause i be damn
if i'ma
waste
my
life
fighting for somebody that ain't decided that she want to be with me.

course/na
bull-jean just miserable
she try to think through it all
but you know how slow she be when she have to think and feel at the same time.
yessuh/she done got caught in she have mind she have mind to liking little
attentions from the wy'mns/she have mind to keep one foot out the door/she have mind to
let mina do all the thinking and feeling/cause she have mind to keep thinking of nothing
but her own have mind
which is laid with traps.
course/na i tell her
gal you in the soon come and your wo'mn in the what was
you best get with the right now for you find yourself a usetabe.

bull-jean finally recover/tell mina
i know that i have not been completely honest with myself

which means i have not been fair to you

but you know that i would never want to be without you

so i am asking
please
lets talk this thing through

mina say
umph

hold on to she silence
so bull-jean press on
say
on this day

with God as my witness
and sweet Angels as judge
i Pray...

i will work on keeping myself Healed and moving forward
day by day
moment by moment
i will unhook myself from fear.
without blaming you for the things i cannot do or feel/i will walk with you
through the good times/the hard times and times unknown.
at the start and end of each day and i will examine my Heart/so that i can offer it
to
you/a gift a flower without thorns.

i Pray/i give you
all that i have:
dedication
support
tender actions
devotion
desire
and exclusivity.
to you
i open my arms
i give you my heart
in Truth
i Pray/now and forever
grow in eternity with me
keep on walking real with me
Love.

i asked you to be my wo'mn a long time ago
i am now asking you to stay with me while i open myself to being/completely
your wo'mn too.

well mina must be from showme cause she let the ole dog back in/but she keep that ass on a short leash for some time
parently
mina need to see how long bull-jean can act as pretty as she talk.

course/na
that was one badd case of the peacocks
but at least bull-jean done
patched back on a few of she feathers

yessuh.

Sharon Bridgforth

is the author of **the bull-jean stories;** performance stories published by RedBone Press (also available on cd). **the bull-jean stories** received the 1998 Lambda Literary Award for best book by a small press. Bridgforth's work has been presented at the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, MN., The Theatre Offensive Out on The Edge Festival in Boston, MA., LaPena in Berkeley, CA., The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and many other venues around the country. Bridgforth is a National Endowment For The Arts/Theatre Communications Group, Playwright in Resident at Frontera @ Hyde Park Theatre (in Austin, Texas) for 1999/2000.

You can catch Bridgforth's work in various anthologies including: **Does Your Mama Know?,** RedBone Press; **ReCREATIONS: Religion and Spirituality in the Lives of Queer People**, Q Press; **KenteCloth**, North Texas University Press 1997 ed.; **MA-KA:Diasporic Juks**, Sister Vision Press; and **Sinister Wisdom 58**.

States Ms. Bridgforth: "I selected the following piece for SBC Magazine's Notes for the 21st Century because it is my Prayer that we as Black same gender-loving/LesBiGayTrans people move into the new millenium celebrating the ways we love each other/intentionally defining how we walk committed in sacred partnerships/challenging what we call Truth..."

AN OPEN CALL TO THE COMMUNITY:
RESTRUCTURING THE NATIONAL BLACK LESBIAN AND GAY LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Alvan Quamina
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

I am happy to announce to you that I have been hired by the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum [NBLGLF] to serve as Executive Director. Because of the Leadership Forum's financial problems, this is currently a volunteer position. I am currently working part-time as the Coordinator for the Alameda County African American AIDS State of Emergency Task Force, which is seeking to respond successfully to a dire state of emergency in the City of Oakland and County of Alameda with respect to AIDS in our local African American community. I am also working part-time as an independent consultant seeking to provide fundraising and other capacity building services to African American non-profit organizations. Setting all of this up, keeping my relationship intact, and keeping food on my table is keeping me very, very busy.

While the immediate problems of the relationship between staff at the Leadership Forum's AIDS Prevention Team in Los Angeles and the rest of the corporate structure have come to a mutually satisfying conclusion, a large number of immediate and longer term problems continue to assail the entire Leadership Forum, including our AIDS Prevention Team.

Most tangibly, the organization is in debt to the tune of approximately $50,000, we have not completed an organizational audit in over three years, our corporate filings are delinquent, and our accounting and accountability systems are in complete disarray. Other than its AIDS programmatic staff, funded by the City and County of Los Angeles, the Leadership Forum has no paid staff, no physical office of our own, and, as of this writing, no dedicated telephone line. I will need your support in raising funds to defray the debt of the Leadership Forum.

Less tangibly, but more importantly, Leadership Forum memberships have dwindled, and we appear to have lost the confidence and support of the community that we purport to serve. As a result, our credibility and even our relevance is in question. This is a much more difficult but much more critical area than the technical difficulties I have mentioned. I desperately need your assistance in redressing this problem area. I need your help, and the Leadership Forum needs your help. First, I invite you to become a Year 2000 member. I ask that you join at the highest support level that your personal and/or organizational budget will allow. Secondly, I would ask that you invite at least ten friends to become Year 2000 members, and that you ask them to invite an additional five friends of theirs to join as well. If you are successful, you will have raised a minimum of $1500 for the Leadership Forum, and you will have both my personal gratitude, and the organizational gratitude of the Leadership Forum.

There are other ways in which you can support as well. The Leadership Forum plans on holding its Year 2000 conference February 17 - 20, 2000 in Chicago, Illinois. That "Healing & Rebuilding" conference will be used as an opportunity for strategic planning. The conference represents the first opportunity for me to get input from our community as a community, about the past transgressions of the Leadership Forum, and the direction the community would like us to take, moving forward.

But that endeavor cannot succeed unless the community is able to, and in fact does, come out to the conference. I need your help in encouraging the community to attend this conference. I need your help in mobilizing our organizations and our community in your area to ensure that folks have the support they need to be able to attend the conference. I have secured the consent of the Board to drop the conference fees to $100 for advance registration, and $125 for on-site registration.

I do have some ideas that I bring to the table, but let me say at the outset that my commitment to the community that I am seeking to serve is that for as long as I am allowed to serve as Executive Director of the Leadership Forum, the agenda and structure of the Leadership Forum will be dictated by the membership of the Leadership Forum, and by the community of black lesbians and gays that we seek to serve. Thus my ideas provide merely the opinion of one member of the NBLGLF, and a springboard for the development of possibilities by each member of the Leadership Forum. Our direction and structure will be decided by the membership of the organization.

And in that vein, I am also committed, and am seeking your assistance in ensuring, that the membership of the Leadership Forum (and the ability to have input in the direction and ongoing decision-making of the Leadership Forum) is socio-economically and culturally diverse and truly representative of black lesbians and gays in this nation. This presents problems of recruitment and funding of economically disadvantaged members, as well as the challenge of developing mechanisms for ongoing membership input that do not limit participation to those who are able to attend national meetings or who have access to Internet and/or fax technology. And that input process must be developed utilizing sufficiently engaging and enjoyable mechanisms for input, that folks are not "bored out" of the process.

If we are to be truly representative and credible, I believe that we need a roster of at least five thousand members, and would prefer to see a membership roster of ten thousand members by year-end 2000. I need your immediate assistance in enrolling new members to meet that goal.

Again, I want to underscore that the vision being offered here is merely the vision of one member, but here is what my personal vision for the Leadership Forum is:

I see us serving as the primary facilitator of national networking and mobilization of black lesbians and gays. I see the Leadership Forum serving as our representative in National Discourse on matters of concern to black lesbians and gays. I see the Forum serving as an advocacy organization to see that national issues of concern to our community are developed, decided and resolved in our favor. And ultimately, I see the Leadership Forum developing an active and effective public policy program that sponsors and supports the development and passage of legislation supportive of us and our issues, and that opposes, and mobilizes the community for the defeat of legislation that would be to our detriment.

I believe that we should identify initial "subject areas" within which we will enter the national discourse. I would suggest the following areas:

Spirituality: Providing a witness of the ways in which our spirituality has sustained us as a community, and as individuals. That witness should not be limited merely to the Judeo/Christian/Islamic family of spiritual tradition, but should extend to all the ways in which we have, and do, express our spirituality as individual black lesbians and gays, celebrating the ways in which our connection with the Deity of our understanding has sustained us as we have navigated life as black people and as lesbians and gays. Taking a stand against the spiritual oppression that has destroyed many of our sistahs and brothas, and that continues to diminish the quality of life for many of us. Proclaiming that connection to Deity is available to those of us that seek such connection, and affirming our rightness to participate in the religious expressions, structures and organizations of our choice, and our right to be free from discrimination and oppression therein.

Youth and Education First: This area must be Youth defined, rather than defined by those of us that can no longer lay credible claim to youth. My personal suggestions to our black lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youth membership would be to direct their attention toward the need for resources to establish and maintain "safe space" social, recreational, and social services facilities specifically for them. I would also suggest that some program be developed and implemented for the mentoring of our youth in the context of leadership development (and not just in the area of lesbian and gay issues).

Health: Providing focus on Womyn's Health, redressing the abysmal record that we as a global culture have developed with respect to that area, particularly with respect to black womyn and other womyn of color.

Providing focus on those womyn's health issues that disproportionately impact lesbian womyn, e.g. breast cancer. Seeking to begin to redress the absence of significant focus on this subset of womyn's health, particularly in the black community.

Providing focus on HIV/AIDS, particularly among black gay and bisexual men. Providing focus on health issues for black people generally.

Economics: Providing focus on the impact that black lesbians and gays are having on the economy. Providing resources and support for those interested in entrepreneurial activity.

Providing focus on organizations that are by and for black lesbians and gays.

Providing a national voice against discrimination, especially where race, gender and sexuality discrimination intersect. Providing focus on the adverse economic impact of such discrimination.

In terms of creating mechanisms for supporting this work, I see a few possibilities. Doubtless, as we open up the process to full member participation and input, we will be able to identify more and better mechanisms for realizing whatever vision we end up adopting. In the meantime, my ideas are as follows:

I think that we will need subject area advisory councils or committees that would assist the Leadership Forum in crafting its position, and its position statements, in each of the above subject areas (or whatever other subject areas we adopt). Those advisory councils could be comprised of professionals in the respective fields, but their work should be informed by the input of all members interested in providing input in that particular subject area. Thus I also think that members should be encouraged to identify a subject matter "work area" within which we can count on their taking the time to provide their opinions, feedbacks, guidance, and direction.

I believe that we should be producing, out of our Subject Area Advisory Councils, and our membership work area teams, position papers that articulate the position of the Leadership Forum and the community that we seek to serve, on various matters. Even after our Advisory Councils and/or our Membership Work Area Teams have agreed on a position, I believe that our position papers should carry, embodied within the position statement, a "dissenting opinion" where there is significant support for such an opinion, so that the heterodoxy of our community (and the value of that heterodoxy) is acknowledged and celebrated, rather than stifled.

Separately, I believe that we should develop geographical area advisory groups as well as regional chapters. I believe that rather than carve up the nation ourselves, or along traditional geopolitical lines, we should encourage chapters to geographically self-define, with eligibility based on some critical minimum mass of memberships in each chapter. I also believe that the Leadership Forum should develop organizational memberships/affiliations in addition to individual memberships (though with the "power" of decision-making residing on the individual member level).

"My commitment to the community that I am seeking to serve is that for as long as I am allowed to serve as Executive Director of the Leadership Forum the agenda and structure of the Leadership Forum will be dictated by the membership of the Leadership Forum, and by the community of black lebians and gays that we seek to serve."

Finally, I believe that we need an enlarged, geographically and demographically representative, and active Board of Directors, and to that end, I believe that we will need to be aggressive in recruiting new members to the Board.

But as I've said before, my ideas are just my ideas. More important is the business of getting your ideas, and the ideas of others in [the] community, about where we should be heading as an organization, and as a national community of black lesbians and gays. I hope that the February conference can be the start of that work.

I hope you are as excited about the work that lies ahead as I am. I look forward to working with you to accomplish the things we must. Please let me know what you are willing to do to help. My e-mail address is AGVQuamina@aol.com

Alvan Quamina is the executive director of **AMASSI, Inc.** an AIDS service and housing provider in the City of Oakland. He is the Western Coordinator for **African American Men United Against AIDS**, and Chair of the **Alameda County African American AIDS State of Emergency Task Force.**

#1 Prescribed medication of its kind*

VIRACEPT IS POWERFUL It's tough on HIV. In many people, VIRACEPT lowered the amount of HIV in the blood to levels below the limit of detection of the test used, and substantially increased CD4 cell counts after 24 weeks of triple combination therapy. (The clinical significance of changes in viral RNA levels in blood has not been established. The virus may still be present in other organ systems.) **VIRACEPT IS EASY TO LIVE WITH** Take it three times a day with your normal meals or light snacks. **VIRACEPT IS GENERALLY WELL TOLERATED** People treated with VIRACEPT may experience some side effects; the most common is diarrhea of moderate or greater intensity in 20% of people in clinical trials. **VIRACEPT WORKS** It's indicated for the treatment of HIV infection when anti-HIV drug therapy is warranted. It is not yet known whether taking VIRACEPT will

WHAT YOUR **PROTEASE INHIBITOR** CAN BE:

help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that can occur with HIV. Some common medications and some HIV related medications should not be taken with VIRACEPT. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, and with increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia. Ask your doctor. For more information, call toll free **1-888-VIRACEPT** or visit **www.agouron.com**. (Refer to the important information on the next page.)

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate
tablets and oral powder

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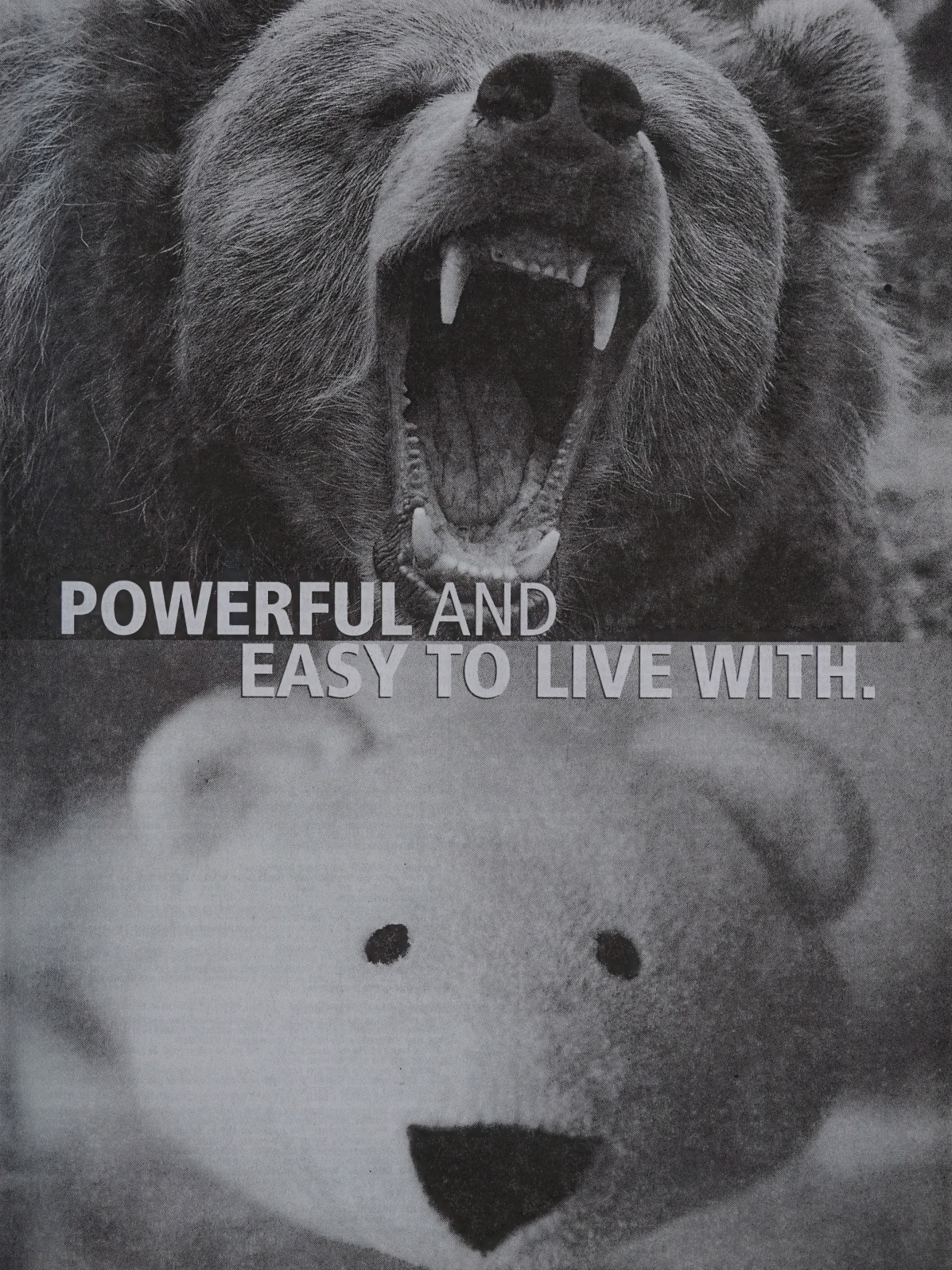
*IMS NPA Prescription Data 8/98 – 5/99


POWERFUL AND
EASY TO LIVE WITH.

VIRACEPT
nelfinavir mesylate
tablets and oral powder

Information for Patients About VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)
Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. You should be aware, however, that the effect of VIRACEPT on HIV in the blood has not been correlated with long-term health benefits. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in their CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT is usually taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. The long-term effects of VIRACEPT are not known at this time. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

It is not known whether VIRACEPT will help you live longer or reduce the number of infections or other illnesses that may occur.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Drugs you should not take with VIRACEPT:
- Seldane® (terfenadine, for allergies)
- Hismanal® (astemizole, for allergies)
- Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)
- Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)
- Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex® and others
- Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Versed® (midazolam)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.
- Rifampin (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®

This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with:

Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:
- Phenobarbital
- Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)
- Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.
- Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:
- Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)
- Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)
- Zerit (stavudine, d4T)
- Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT: Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be reduced. Studies are now taking place to learn about the safety of combining VIRACEPT with Viramune.
- Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Norvir™ (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.
- Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. If used in combination with saquinavir hard gelatin capsules at 600 mg three times daily, no dose adjustments are needed. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include abdominal pain, asthenia, nausea, flatulence, and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. The light blue VIRACEPT Tablets should be taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. You do **not** have to take VIRACEPT exactly every 8 hours. Instead, you can take it at normal times when you are eating.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 through 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight Kg	Body Weight Lb	Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
7 to < 8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	-
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1¼	-
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1½	-
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1¾	-
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	-
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2¼	-
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2½	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3¾	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

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LEND A BROTHER A HAND

By Damon J. Murphy
MARIETTA, GEORGIA

Recently life taught me the value of being selfless in helping other black gay brothers in need. It is a lesson I will never forget and I am sure that I have forever touched a young man's life. I asked for his permission to tell our story and he said it MUST be told. For the protection of his identity I shall refer to him as Shawn.

While browsing on the internet one afternoon, I decided to log into a chat room. I simply asked, "Are there any serious brothers in this room that would like to chat?" I got more of a serious issue than I knew. Out of nowhere, Shawn private-messaged me and we began to share information about each other. Later he asked if we could exchange numbers and I agreed that it was all right for him to call me. A day later he did and I shared more with him in our short time of talking than I have with some people I see everyday.

Shawn is an eighteen year old high school senior in the Midwest who had been going through sexual abuse from a male family member since age 13. He shared intimate details about his life and his surroundings in a town that was extremely small and practically in the middle of nowhere. I began to feel for him and his issues as many times he would call me and cry about advances this family member would make and the verbal abuse he'd get from other family members. In a word he felt: "trapped."

I was reminded of when I was a youth traveling from my hometown of New York City into rural eastern North Carolina to visit relatives. I wondered how could any black gay man have a life there. That was when I was thirteen, twelve years ago. I couldn't imagine having the type of burdens this young man had to bear. Even worse, he was about an hour and change to the nearest big city, which by many people standards is rather small.

After months of talking to him via phone, sending him inspirational materials, and even speaking with school officials about him attending college in another area, I decided to take a trip to his town. Most of my friends encouraged me, but they were concerned for my well being. After all, can't people pretend to be something they are not over the internet?

A good friend of mine wanted to help me, so he came with me to enthusiastically help this young black gay man that we have only seen in pictures.

With the help of a rental car, we headed north and then west, a trip that took seven hours. I kept thinking along the way, that I must be crazy, but I am reminded of my internal drive from God to spread good in the world.

When I arrive in his small town, we meet three blocks away from his home at a gas station. In a whim, he climbs into the car and we head across the state line to the suburbs of the bigger city. We took a chance on him and he took a chance on us. This is not my typical daily routine. After all, it was a slight financial disturbance for me to do this in the first place. However, in a weekend I am able to talk to him face to face, let him cry all his sorrow out, laugh his joys, and explain his fears.

I am armed with Keith Boykin's book, "Respecting the Soul," which is nearly impossible (if at all) to find in his area. I also bring college materials, information on suicide prevention (which he has spoke of), and a Les Brown motivational tape. We went to the movies, restaurants, and an amusement park. My friend and I were excited because we'd never been to this city in which we went, but even more than being tourists for a moment, we were friends to someone forever. He has termed me "his hero", something never said to me in my life.

But what I envision is that this young man will turn into a wiser younger man who will give the gift I gave to him. The gift of LOVE. That was given to me by those who have come before me, people currently in my life, and by God always. I believe in the motto "To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required."

No matter where our lives lead, Shawn will not forget that two men came from Georgia, hundreds of miles away, in the name of brotherhood; brothers he could trust, who did not take advantage of him. I took a piece of his limited world and carved a window for him to see life differently. He had not heard of Keith Boykin, E. Lynn Harris, Clique Magazine, SBC, Venus, etc, things that many of us in larger metropolitan areas take for granted.

Though my situation is a little extreme and placed myself in a jeopardizing position, I urge brothers who have themselves together to lend a helping hand. Someone somewhere needs you.

Damon J. Murphy is a 25 year old New York City native living in metrpolitan Atlanta where he works for **Sprint Business**. A graduate of **Florida International University in Miami**, he holds a **BA in Psychology**. Damon is striving to continue his education in the Washington DC area and become a clinician who will add to the field of Psychology in sexual research in a multicultural context.

I AM WHO I AM

the art of Marvin Vines

TOLEDO, OHIO

Artist **Marvin Vines**, a native of Toledo, Ohio, made his transition in 1997. But what he left behind is a masterful collection of some 700 works, many of them giving visual voice to inner city youth, while others, as in the collection represented on the cover, the content page and these pages [under the collection title **"I Am Who I Am"**], exude a respect and dignity that is too rarely accorded the African American man. Vines received many awards and grants for his work which will be on display and on sale at many Africentric homosexual events this year. For brochures and direct sales information, contact Soul On Canvas Publications/ P.O. Box 10134/ Columbus, Ohio 43201/ 614.252.2616 fax: 614.252.5958/ web: www.souloncanvas.com

IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS

by Jennifer Glover
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

I KNOW THAT I COME FROM A TRIBE OF QUEENS.
STRONG WOMEN, TEACHERS & WARRIORS.
I WAS TOLD THE STORIES OF MY MOTHERS BEFORE ME.
LIVING TO DIE.
COLD AND SICK IN THE BELLY OF A SHIP.
DEHUMANIZED BY A WHIP & CHAINS.
SACRIFICED LIFE FOR THE WEALTH OF SOMEONE ELSE.

BLOOD OF MY MOTHERS DRIPPED IN VAIN.
MISUNDERSTOOD ARTHRITIS RIDDEN KNUCKLES.
LOSING COUNT OF YELLOW RAPE BABIES STOLEN AT DAWN.

STARING AT THE NOOSE FROM THE PORCH, WHILE SHADOWS
RUN FROM THE HOODS OF THE NIGHT.

ABHORRENCE, RACISM, SEXISM HITTING & WHIPPING THEIR FLESH.
SCARRED BY THE WAKE OF HATE,
ABUSE AND MISUSE.
GENERATIONS OF HOPES AND DREAMS UPON THEIR BACKS,
WHILE THEIR EYES CRY NEVERS.

IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS I SAW MY MOTHER.
THEY INSTRUCTED, DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.
TAUGHT TO OBEY HER MAN,
HER MEN WHILE CARRYING HER NATION IN HER STOMACH.
CRYING TEARS THAT MEANT NOTHING,
WHILE HIT & KICKED BY THE ONE SHE LOVES.
HER MAN.

SHE CARRIED THOSE BABIES WHICH WERE FORCED UPON HER YOUTH.
IT DRAINED THE OASIS OF HER HEART.

STOOD IN LINE, SOUP KITCHENS WITH THE NEIGHBORS HUNGRY CHILDREN.

MAKING SURE WE CAME INTO THE WORLD, WHILE SHE DIED YOUNG AND ANGRY.
SOBBING TODDLERS RAN ABOUT, LAYING HELPLESS AND COLD.
WATCHING FROM THE DISTANCE AS THE SYSTEM STOLE US,
RAPED US AND CREATED JADED OFFSPRING.

SHE, WAS FORCED NOT TO FEEL, TO NEED, TO BE NEEDED.
CAMOUFLAGED HOPE, VENOM IN HER VEINS.
ALL WHILE HOLDING HER HEAD HIGH.
SHE, WAS EXPECTED TO GIVE ALL AND RECEIVE NOTHING IN RETURN.
NO FEELING, NO COMFORT, NO ENERGY, NO SOLACE.

IN THE MIDST OF BLACKNESS I SAW WOMEN.
OUR WOMEN, BLACK WOMEN, WOMEN OF COLOR RUNNING.

RUNNING TO THEIR EMOTION, THEIR VOICE.
DYING FROM WITHIN WHILE PASSION TRIES TO FILTER FROM THEIR EYES.
RUNNING TO THE EXISTENCE OF LIFE AND LIVING.
SUBMERGING AS WHITE RIGHTS BECOME SLAMMING DOORS.

THE REFLECTION OF STRUGGLE, DEFLECTION AND REJECTION.
SOME WITH FUTILE HOPELESS DREAMS.
TRAILS OF TEARS AND STOLEN LAND.
OUR WOMEN AT WAR WITH BEING HUMAN,
FIGHTING AND STRIVING FOR THEIR HUMANITY.

WE GIVE THE UNIVERSE OUR ALL WHILE CHARLATAN SMILES GLEAM THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

PERPETUATED DEATH TRAVELING THROUGH THE CENTURIES,
FUELING THE MILLENNIUM WITH NEW BLOOD.

I KNOW OUR OPPRESSION HAS GIVEN US STRENGTH.
WE ARE BEAUTY, POWER AND INTEGRITY.

THIS IS WHAT I WAS TOLD.
THIS IS WHAT I KNOW IN THE MIDST OF MY BLACKNESS

Jennifer Glover, pictured above standing center with fellow members of Black Coffee writers and readers group, is the Sisters Affairs Editor for SBC magazine.

BUILD, BUILD BUILD

by Pastor Greg Smith
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Take action in our lives. Take action in our communities. Just a Note. We must build in every aspect. When I say 'Just a Note' it is a reminder of what we must do.

I am reminded that we have had a long struggle to acquire our basic human rights to love one another without public denunciation. It is imperative that we begin to openly acknowledge who we are and take some of the heat off of our effeminate brothers and masculine sisters. We are all in this together.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that society has dealt a severe blow to the minds of our community and has weakened the souls of many in their innocence. We must build the hearts and souls of our sisters and brothers. We must build the content and character of our sisters and our brothers. We must build a no non-sense offensive against the rhetoric that attempts to destroy and weaken our sisters and our brothers.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of story after story of parents and siblings cast off by the teachings of a misinformed church. God's love is unconditional and for everyone. We must commit to reforming the hearts and minds of parents. We must build a better understanding with family. We must build safe havens of communication for families to become better informed.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of Paris is Burning and how the images therein informed a community about outreach and gave visual testament to the meaning of Extended Family.

We must build in the areas of the arts. We must support our sisters and brothers in the arts. We must seek them out and create venues and avenues for them to share their expressions. We must build with edutainment. As First Lady Hillary Rodham-Clinton said "Art is not a luxury, it is a necessity."

Build, Build, Build

I am reminded of the frequency of domestic violence in our community, contrasted with the infrequency of long term relationships. We must build on developing healthier, more nurturing relationships. We build internally to share externally. We must build not with the concept of 'A Knight (or Queen) in Shining Armor', but the concept of loving and being loved in the healthiest of ways.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that we have grown further and further apart along the same gender lines. We brothers must build healthier relationships with our lesbian sisters and our lesbian sisters must build healthier relationships with their gay brothers. We are sisters and brothers. We must do this work together to insure equality within and beyond our community.When building as a family, a brother looks out for a sister and a sister looks out for a brother.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded that we have remained deaf to the needs of the Transgender community. Our community was built on the backs of transgenders. They have taken the brunt of negative language, discrimination and public humiliation, and not just from the heterosexual community. We must build with a consciousness that knows our transgender siblings have a plate and place card at this table.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of the issue of bisexuality. This issue has divided many. I have witnessed some of our (self-defined) leaders who struggled with this concept and currently only take an affirming position because it is politically correct. We must build a better understanding of bisexuality to dissolve our own prejudices and shunning of this part of our community that has always existed and is deservedly growing in visibility.

Build, Build, Build.

I am reminded of our weakened community structure. We must build, build, build social networks (i.e...rap groups, chat rooms), creating links that give us the ability to disseminate information quickly, adding to our cache of resources.

Build, Build, Build.

And finally, I am reminded of our lack of faith-community resources. We must build faith centers in each of our communities. We must have our own safe faith havens to facilitate spiritual growth. When the conservative church---black or white---mobilizes against us they use their congregations and their mailing lists. We must build similar congregations and mailing lists.

And we must encourage some of our young sisters and brothers in the seminaries to come and establish their own faith centers.

We must build in the wilderness, we must build were many dare not go, we must build by faith.

We Must Build, Build, Build.

"I am reminded that we have remained deaf to the needs of the Transgender Community. Our community was built on the backs of transgenders. They have taken the brunt of negative language, discrimination and public humiliation, and not just from the heterosexual community. We must build with a consciousness that knows our transgender siblings have a plate and place card at this table."

Pastor Greg Smith is the Founding Minister of New Light With God Community Church.

SPIRITUALITY: A CALL TO ACTION

by Rev. Jenenne R. Macklin
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

If our spirituality does not propel us into action, what good is it? When we look back over our history and reference our ancestors, we find, at the foundation of their very existence, struggles, challenges, victories and great achievement. In a word...spirituality. Before organized religion, spirituality was the force, the presence, and their power; it was the catalyst for their action. Whether it was the movement toward freedom, steps toward peace on the center stage of life, or fighting for the right to vote, spirituality was the force underlying the action. All of the saints and sages, masters and prophets, faith healers, priestesses and shamans allowed their spirituality to propel them into action.

"If your spirituality doesn't propel you to action, what good is it?"

Spirituality is not passive. Spirituality is a force, a presence, that when embraced fully propels us into action. Maybe it's to live our life more as a whole person, kicking down the doors of fear and stepping out of the closet into greater faith. Maybe it's helping others outside of your immediate circle of friends. Maybe it's being active on the stage of world politics to help our communities. Maybe it's simply spending responsibly. Maybe it's making a greater commitment to live according to a higher calling. Maybe it's accepting that you are sacred and divine and acting like it. Whatever "it" is, action is the end result. Through action healing happens. Through action our soul rejoices. Through action we play a key role in making a difference in our lives, our communities and in this world.

We are being called more and more to take action on a larger scale, to recognize that we are under attack by forces far greater than any and all external forces: our own fears and apathy. Our action has to take the form of commitment to life through our spirituality. No longer can we allow fear and shame to stand in the way of our rightful freedom as children of God. No longer can we allow the Willie Lynch mentality to separate us from our brothers and sisters. No longer can we allow our forward motion to be propelled by the few with the courage and willingness to take a stand. No longer can we allow our commitment to be lukewarm. No longer can we sing praises on Sunday and return to closets on Monday. No longer can we live in fear of the very God who embraces us with nothing but love. No longer can we look to someone or something outside of ourselves to save us. No longer can we look over our shoulder thinking we will be rescued from the chaos we create. Again, I say, if your spirituality does not propel you to action, what good is it?

The man that many of you hold as your Savior, Jesus, took action. The people many of us revere in our history, Martin, Gandhi, Jackie Robinson, Madame C.J. and Malcolm, took action. The woman whose strength and tenacity we marvel at, Harriet, took action. The woman, who speaks loud and proud, Maxine, took action. The man who spoke and said "Enough" in the face of AIDs, Phil, took action. The list is growing, yet it still does not fully represent our numbers, our strength or courage. Each of us has something that only we can do. The entire universe is waiting for us to step up to the plate and do what it is we are here to do for ourselves, our communities and the world.

Spirituality isn't just about temporarily feeling good or reaping personal prosperity, healing and abundance. It isn't about being passive. It's about recognizing and embracing the Truth of who you are: a child of God made in the dynamic, infinite, powerful image and likeness of our Creator and allowing that to propel you into action. In the realization of the Truth of your oneness, you will find all the courage, strength, faith, determination, wisdom, creativity to act! Ask yourselves, if your spirituality doesn't propel you to action, what good is it? Peace.

Reverend Jenenne R. Macklin is the founder and spiritual leader of **Living In The Light Ministry.** Since her ordination in 1990, she has lead many retreats, workshops and luctures on overcoming fear, living by spiritual principles and forgiveness. She is also the author of the inspirational book **Faith The Size of a Mustard Seed.**

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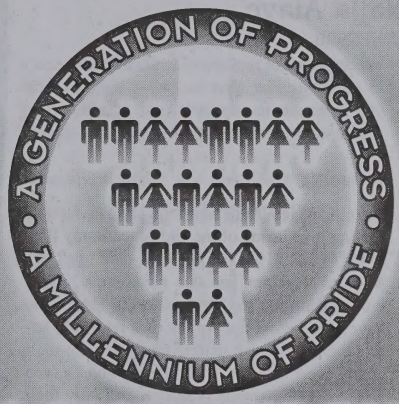
May 20 & 21, 2000



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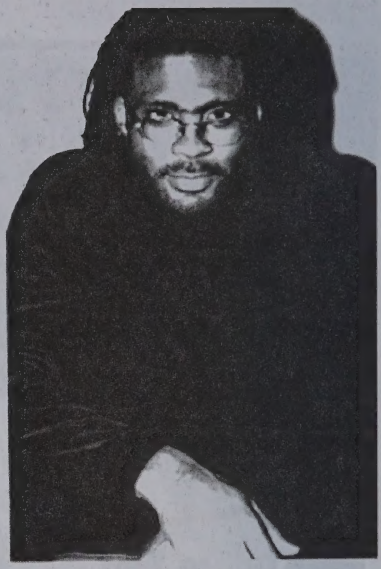


FINDING THE PEACE BEYOND THE PAIN

by Sundiata Najja Alaye'
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

I'm Still Standing

We are so blessed. We are still here. Certainly, there is no denying that we have been through a lot. But we are still here and have the opportunity to touch happiness. After all that we have been through, it's time that we found some peace in our lives. It's time that we started to live if we haven't already.

I see faces in my mind all the time. Familiar faces. Beautiful faces of men, women, and children I knew. Faces that I will never be able to touch again, but that exists in my mind or in the photo albums in my wall unit that I seldom look at any more. There is the occasional videotape that I run across and play to make me remember. I don't want to forget. I don't ever want to forget the many lessons I learned from all of life's experiences and from losing as many friends and family members as I did. Yet the primary lesson I've learned, the one that sticks most prominently in my life, is the lesson that these Brothers and Sisters taught me. Live.

You see, many of the people that I loss didn't start living until they knew they were dying. It was a notion that I started to grasp in the middle of the AIDS madness. A lesson that stuck with me, took shape, and became a principle theme in my life. Many years ago I set out on a path toward finding my peace and living whole. This reconciliation of my body, mind, and soul completely changed my life. It was a painful process for it made me look, not at what others were doing or had done to me, but rather, what I was or was not doing to and for myself. I had to deal with my behavior, my pain, my issues, and my self-esteem. I had to comfort myself and confront my truth as a means of finding love inside of me and peace in my life.

My soul searching has also given me a way of recognizing and paying homage to those who have gone before me. In my own way I am letting them know that neither their lives nor their deaths were in vain. I've learned and learned well the lessons their presence, and now their absence, was designed to teach me. I know now why they were here.

Get Here If You Can

Something is happening now in the world. A change is looming over the horizon and if you are in tuned with the Spirit, you can feel the energy. It's not necessarily a visual change, something tangible, something we can see. It's a lot deeper than that. Much, much deeper. There seems to be a movement, a silent call moving about the earth, asking, no, begging us to come into a more spiritual awareness. In numerous conversations, I've tried to analogize it by describing it as the door to Noah's Arc. The door is beginning to close once again. I don't know what that represents, and I don't know what happens if the door closes and we are not on board. I only know that this call to a more spiritual consciousness is ultimately what will save us from hopelessness, from despair, from grief, and even from ourselves. Please, Brothers and Sisters, take these into consideration:

Mending Your Spirit.
Invite the Spirit, the God of your understanding, back into your life. Stay in constant prayer for clarity, direction, and an understanding of your individual purpose and path. Remember, we have a divine function and mission on this earth. That mission is to learn, to teach, to love, and to heal. That is all.

Some, not all of us, have burdened spirits. Spirits burdened by insecurities over our body image, internalized homophobia, toxic relationships, and the grief associated with losing so many of our dear friends. Mostly, though, our spirits are burdened because we've buried our connection to the Creator - our spirituality. For so long we have heard that because of who we are and because of who we love that we have no right nor do we have access to the Creator. But we do. We all do and you must believe that.

There is nothing wrong with you. Never let anyone tell you that there is. We are not crazy, deviant, or sick. Who we love is who we love, and love is not a sickness. I don't have all the answers. I don't know why we were created this way. Perhaps we were selected for this mission as a means of injecting more love, more tolerance, and more compassion into a world that is severely lacking in each. Perhaps we are here to introduce a collective healing, a healing that can only occur one soul at a time. It all begins with you.

Loving You

Nurturing your spirit will automatically prompt you to love yourself more and heaven knows this is something that we all need so desperately. Many of us can think back to instances in our lives where we could have easily overcome, avoided, or otherwise help to heal a situations or event by loving ourselves more than we did.

Now is a good time to do it.

Many of us don't really know ourselves because we are sometimes so busy pretending to be other people to please other people, that by the time we are alone, we don't know who we are! But growth only occurs when exposed wounds are healed, and healing suggests coming to know yourself. Find and face your truth. This will require you to retrace your steps, surface sometimes painful experiences of your past, and address them lovingly so that you can forgive them and move them from your consciousness. You will then begin to resurface your natural self, find out who you are again, and love you for you and for all of the beautiful gifts you have to offer.

Loving you also brings a renewed insight into living and brings an appreciation for life, accountability, and responsibility. It will bring a respect for your existence and the existence of your Brothers and Sisters, meaning that it will help you to see your Brothers and Sisters as an extension of you, and not as a substitutions for your pain. It will help you to see them not as your enemy, your nemesis, or as your competition, but as an extension of your love.

Remember that your life and your existence is a gift from the Creator. But also remember that the Creator gives gifts that are meant for everyone. This says that you are a gift to us all and healed people heal the whole world.

Letting Go

Learn to surrender the results. Everything in life is divinely orchestrated. Our destinies have been defined, and we are only walking our natural paths.

Learn to surrender people. You cannot control people, their actions, their behaviors, or their attitudes. One of the greatest lesson in life that you may ever learn is to release people to be who they are without it shaking your peace.

Fear is a creation of our unconscious thought process. It comes to us when we do not think or respond from love. Love gives you new insight and brings with it a peaceful existence.

Always know that you have a choice in how you process anything that is said or done to you, and know that your reactions can influence outcomes. You can walk your path in fear or you can walk that path in love. If you react from fear, you allow your emotions to take you out of peace. However, if you take a step back, pray, and ask to be able to see a situation, any situation, differently, you receive a powerful enlightenment that will reveal to you the lessons in love that you are to take from the experience. With this as your primary thought process, you will always be at peace.

Prayer, surrender, and forgiveness gives you everything you need. Your miracle comes simply by changing your perceptions, changing your own mind. Shifting your thoughts from fear to love reminds your conscious thoughts that it is in your defenselessness that your safety really lies.

Applying Love

Once you've learned to commit to the spirit and love yourself more, not only will you learn to treat yourself better but, one of the more key benefits is that you'll learn to treat others better.

Recently, a friend was describing a situation where he approached a Brother in a club who he thought was attractive. My friend, who himself is very attractive, explained that when he extended his hand to the Brother to introduce himself, the Brother looked at him and said, "What makes you think that someone like me is going to talk to someone like you!" Even I felt the blow of that comment, not only because it was so unnecessary, but mostly because it shows just how separated this Brother is from his own reality. Somehow he believes that he is somehow different, special, or better than other people. I pray for his awakening before it's too late.

Underneath all we pile on the outside to make us appear more separate, we are not. No matter what we do to make ourselves appear more attractive, more appealing, and unalike, we are connected. None of us, not one single one of us, is better or more than the next. We are all the same. Think of us all as spokes of a wheel. Though we may branch out in different directions, we radiate from the same center. That center is the Creator, the Creator and His Love.

Always keep love present. Your peace is my peace, and my peace is yours. We all share a common denominator, and that is the love we are capable of giving and sharing that is to be used to heal the world and heal each other. Whatever you do, always, always remember to do it kindly.

Putting It Into Practice

Admittedly, changing our minds to change our lives can be challenging. To think and respond from love is a radical approach to the way we have lived our lives all this time. But if you have found that previous methods have never worked or only worked for a short time, try this approach and watch how miraculously life begins to change.

Many of us know what we want. We even know that we have what it takes to get or to do what we want. Only for some reason, we don't take the initiative to get the process started. Sometimes its fear of change, sometimes its fear of realizing our own brilliance. You see, it's not always the darkness that we are afraid of. Sometimes we are afraid of our own light! From the depths of your soul, pull out the inertia you need to simply get the process started, and the momentum you'll require to keep the process going. Life will change dramatically and you will find a new sense of purpose.

"Don't be afraid of anything; of change, of growth, of the past, of the present, nor of what will happen tomorrow. There is no fear. There is only love."

So here are my notes and my thoughts about what we may need and what we may want to do differently, again, or even for the first time. Indeed this is a time for change, and an opportunity to put things into proper perspective, to heal our lives and change our focus. This is a significant time in our history and I can only imagine the heights we can reach with a community of disciplined mines, healed, whole, and loving people. It is my warmest dream.

Each and every one of you will be in my prayers. Hang in there. Your peace, your happiness, and treasures beyond your imagination are merely a whisper away.

Peace, Blessings, Light & Love

Sundiata Najja Alaye' is the author of the the new self-help book Empty Promises Private Pain - A Light Out of Darkness available through Moyo Press - $15.95. Mr. Alaye' can be reached online at www.moyopress.com

MY GAY PROBLEM, THEIR BLACK PROBLEM

by Earl Ofari Hutchinson
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA---I still cannot forget the scene I saw in a movie during the mid-1970's for two reasons. One, it was the first time that I had ever seen two men passionately kiss on the screen. Two, there was the reaction from the mostly black audience. They went berserk. They screamed, jeered, and hooted at the screen. It took several minutes for the crowd to quiet down and ushers to restore order. As I left the theater I listened to the young men talk. Their contempt and disgust for these two men spilled out into the street and into the parking lot. They called them "faggots," "punks," and "sissies." It seemed as if they were feverishly trying to scrape the slime off themselves that the scene of these two men kissing had left on them.

A year or so later, I was at a local political meeting. Afterwards, while talking with a friend, a young black man came up to us. My friend winked at me and whispered "he's a queer," and quickly walked away. I stood there alone with him. After a moment of awkward silence, we started talking. I mentioned that I was a jogger. His eyes immediately lit up. He said he was too. He quickly suggested that maybe we could go jogging together. Even though I really did not know anything about the man and neither, I suspect, did my friend, I still froze in naked panic.

I thought about the young men who jeered the gay characters on the screen at the theater. At the time I thought that the antics of the jeering young men were downright silly and in poor taste. I now realized that I was no different than them. I had the same horror of, and prejudice against, gays as they had. But why? Did they threaten me? Why did they stir queasy and violent passions in so many of us? Did I feel an even greater dislike for a black man who was gay? Did they threaten and challenge my fragile masculinity at the most base ambiguous level?

They did.

And this forced me to take a deep soul search into my own homophobic fears. Even though I hated what I saw and had no rational explanation for these fears, I understood why they were buried tomb-like in me.

From cradle to grave, much of America has drilled into black men the thought that they are less than men. This made many black men believe and accept the gender propaganda that the only real men in American society are white men. In a vain attempt to recapture their denied masculinity, many black men mirrored America's traditional fear and hatred of homosexuality. They swallowed whole the phony and perverse John Wayne definition of manhood; that real men talked and acted tough, shed no tears, never showed emotions.

These were the prized strengths of manhood. When men broke the prescribed male code of conduct and showed their feelings, they were sneered at as weaklings, and their manhood questioned. Many black men who bought this malarkey did not heap the same scorn on women who were lesbians. White and black gay women did not pose the same threat as gay men. They were women and that meant that they were fair game to be demeaned and marginalized by many men.

Many blacks, in an attempt to distance themselves from gays and avoid confronting their own biases, dismissed homosexuality as "Their thing." Translated: homosexuality was a kinky contrivance of white males and females that reflected the decadence of white America. They made no distinction between white gays and other whites. To them, whites were whites were whites.

Many blacks listened to countless black ministers shout and condemn to fire and brimstone any man who dared think about, yearn for, or, God forbid, engage in the "godless" and "unnatural act" of having a sexual relationship with another man. If they had any doubts about it, they fell back on the good book. They could, as generations of bible-toting white preachers did, flip to the oft-cited line in Leviticus that sternly calls men laying down with men, "the abomination."

While many Americans made gays their gender bogeymen, many blacks made black gay men their bogeymen and waged open warfare against them. Black gay men became the pariahs among pariahs, and, wherever possible, every attempt was made to railroad them out of black life. Some of these efforts have been especially pathetic. Civil rights leader Bayard Rustin, a known homosexual and the major mover and shaker behind the historic 1963 March on Washington, was sternly warned by some March leaders not to publicly "embarrass" or compromise the March by his personal conduct. A popular black nationalist magazine of that day took frequent and dizzy delight in calling Rustin "the little fairy." No black leader publicly challenged its homophobia.

In Soul on Ice, published in 1969, then black radical Eldridge Cleaver viciously mugged James Baldwin for his homosexuality and declared homosexuality the ultimate "racial death wish." No black leader publicly challenged Cleaver on this point, and his outrageous fad theories on sexuality were praised by an entire generation of radical wannabees as if they were the sacrosanct word from on high.

A decade later black gay filmmaker, Marlon Riggs, hoped that the hostile public attitudes of many blacks toward gays had lessened enough to at least permit a civil discussion among them about masculinity and homophobia. In a purposely ambiguous and veiled concession to the anti-gay mood, Riggs stole a bit of the rhetoric of black militants and proclaimed that "Black men loving black men is the revolutionary act of our times." It did not work. Riggs found that anti-gay bigotry was just as entrenched as ever among many blacks.

Rappers such as Ice Cube still rapped "Real niggers ain't gay" on his "Death Certificate" album. Leading Afrocentrists swore that "homosexuality is a deviation from Africentricity." And bushels of black ministers, with generous support from their white Christian fundamentalist brethren, still branded homosexuality "a sin before God." Some blacks escalated their low intensity warfare against gays to an all-out, take no prisoners battleground.

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan made it almost part of his divine mission to attack homosexuality. Even though the Million Man March publicly welcomed homosexuals and treated the ones who participated civilly, no one really believed that this represented a sea

change in attitude among blacks toward gays. If some did, Farrakhan quickly wiped out that notion in a TV interview with conservative newsmen Evans and Novack in March, 1997. He made it clear that he still regarded homosexuality as an "unnatural act" and would discourage the practice whenever and wherever he could.

The traditional civil rights leaders, however, continued to denounce homophobia, and urge support of gay rights. They reminded blacks that homophobia and racism were two sides of the same coin and that many of the same white conservatives---from Pat Buchanan to Jerry Falwell---that ruthlessly savaged gays, were the same ones that ruthlessly savaged civil rights.

They were right. But, their argument still cut little weight with many blacks. The one and only comprehensive survey conducted in 1995 that measured black attitudes toward gays found that blacks, like whites, had not slackened up on one bit in there hostility toward gays. More damning and ominous for blacks, they still continued to heap special scorn on black gay men. The one potential bright spot in this even had a taint. The survey found that there was less anti-gay sentiment among the more educated, less religious and more affluent blacks but ONLY if the gay male was white. They still launched black gay men far, far out into the netherworld of contempt.

That anti-gay feeling runs so deep among many African-Americans that there is a virtual blackout of any discussion or activities of black gay men. Black gays and lesbians have held a number of National Black Gay Conferences since 1987. Yet there has been only scant mention of them in the black press. The first national black gay and lesbian publication, BLK, might as well gather dust in the Smithsonian Museum for all that most blacks know about it.

Some blacks justify the out-of-sight, out-of-mind exclusion of gay men from black life by arguing that the gay life style is a major threat to the black family. This hinges on the shaky assumption that there are thousands of gay men lying in wait to subvert traditional family values. Beyond the fact that no one really knows how many black or non-black men consider themselves exclusively homosexual, much of what passes for traditional family values has long been turned into shambles. The happy face Ozzie and Harriet family of the drowsy 1950's that conservatives pant away for has been totally exposed by writers as a fraud even in that day. Many men drank, gambled, had adulterous affairs, beat their wives and kids, and took a complete hands-off-attitude toward child rearing and nurturing. Many of them were absentee fathers. The only difference is that they were physically in the home.

Even if Ozzie and Harriet was not a complete fabrication, America of the 1990's bears no resemblance to the 1950's. The majority of women must work outside the home. They are better educated, are pursuing careers in business, the professions and the trades. They have drastically changed the shape of gender and family relations in America. There were all sorts of family combinations in the 1990's that were barely imaginable a generation ago.

There were single working women, single working men, grandparents, single sex male and female couples, step parents, foster parents, designated guardians, foster homes, and even children that are raising children. If the American family still fully resembled the storybook Ozzie and Harriet family, the list of the mightiest destabilizers of the black family which many can recite by heart would still remain the same: poverty, unemployment, lack of education, chronic disease, violence, drugs, alcoholism, imprisonment, and early death. Homosexuals are not on this list.

Black gay men continue to feel like men without a people. They carry the triple burden of being black, male, and gay. They are rejected by many blacks and sense that they are only barely tolerated by white gays. Many black gay men feel trapped, tormented and confused by this quandary. They still spend sleepless nights and endless days figuring out ways to repress, hide and deny their sexuality from family members, friends, and society. Black gay men worry that the hatred of other black men towards them will not change as long as they feel that their manhood is subverted, as long as they feel that they must accept America's artificial standard of what a "real" man is, and anti-gay attitudes remain firmly rooted in much of the American public.

In time, more black men will come out of the closet and more black men will meet them, get to know them better as people too, or in some cases, discover that they have known them all along as a family member, a friend, or an acquaintance. This will force even more black men to reexamine their own dubious definitions of manhood and confront their own homophobia. This will go far toward ridding them of their fear of black gays as their bogeymen. But in the mean time, much work needs to be done in the 21st Century.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is the author of **The Crisis in Black and Black**.
email:ehutchi344@aol.com

A POEM FOR THOUGHT

by RuNell Ni Ebo

Lord, Lord
Why did You make me Black?
Why did You make someone
The world wants to hold back?

Black is the color of dirty clothes,
The color of grimy hands and feet
Black is the color of darkness,
The color of tire-beaten streets.

Why did You give me thick lips,
A broad nose and kinky hair?
Why did You make someone
Who receives the hatred stare?

Black is the color of the bruised eye
When someone gets hurt.
Black is the color of darkness,
Black is the color of dirt.

How come my bone structure's so thick,
My hips and cheeks are high?
How come my eyes are brown
And not the color of daylight sky?

Why do people think I'm useless?
How come I feel so used?
Why do some people see my skin
And think I should be abused?

Lord I just don't understand.
What is it about my skin?
Why do some people want to hate me
And not know the person within?

Black is what people are "listed"
When others want to keep them away.
Black is the color of shadows cast.
Black is the end of the day.

Lord you know my own people mistreat me
And I know this just ain't right.
They don't like my hair.
They say I'm too dark or too light.

Lord don't You think it's time for You
To make a change?
Why don't You re-do creation and
Make everyone the same?

GOD ANSWERED:

Why did I make you Black?
Why did I make You Black?

Get off your knees and look around.
Tell me, what do you see?
I didn't make you in the image of darkness,
I made you in likeness of ME!

I made you the color of coal from which
Beautiful diamonds are formed.
I made you the color of oil, the black gold that
Keeps people warm.

I made you from the rich, dark earth that can
Grow the food you need.
Your color's the same as the black stallion, a
Majestic animal is he.

I didn't make you in the image of darkness.
I made you in likeness of ME!

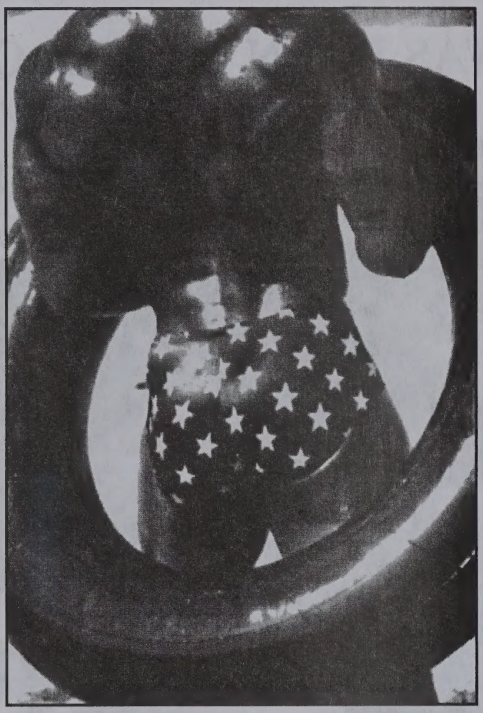
All the colors of the heavenly rainbow can be
Found throughout every nation.
But when all of those colors were blended, you
Became my greatest creation.

Your hair is the texture of lamb's wool.
Such a humble little creature is he.
I am the Shepherd who watches them.
I am the One who will watch over thee.

You are the color of midnight sky.
I put the stars' glitter in your eyes.
There is a smile hidden behind your pain.
That's why your cheeks are so high.

You are the color of dark clouds formed,
When I send My strongest weather.
I made your lips full so when you kiss the one
that you love, they will remember.

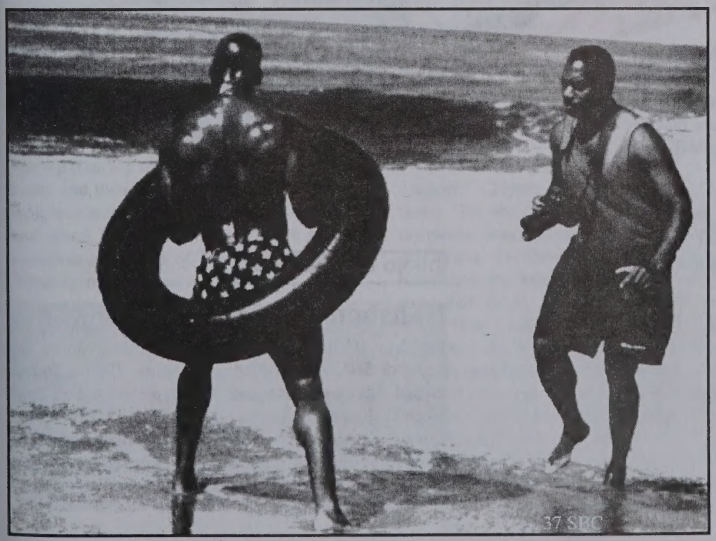
Your stature is strong, your bone structure thick
To withstand the burdens of time.
The reflection you see in the mirror...
The image that looks back is MINE.



IF SATURN WERE A MAN

His rings would be levels of pride and achievement
His body would be strength and integrity
His core would be faith and stability
His stars would be family, friends and beacons of love

---photographer Greg McNeal
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA



Greg McNeal is an award-winning photographer whose work has graced the pages and covers of several national publications as well as many community-conscious and AIDS/HIV awareness ad campaigns. The above image, entitled **SATURN**, will be one of three images in an exhibition called **Reflections In Black: A History of 19th and 20th Century African American Photographers**, touring with the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture in February of this year.

Photo to the left: photgrapher McNeal working with model Joeseph Whitman

I WAS BORN TO BE A QUEEN

by Nahshon Anderson
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Everybody asked me was I high when I did it. I was not high. I was on a natural high. It's like a light has been turned on and it's making me become the person I was always afraid of being. It was freedom. And I enjoyed every single minute of it.

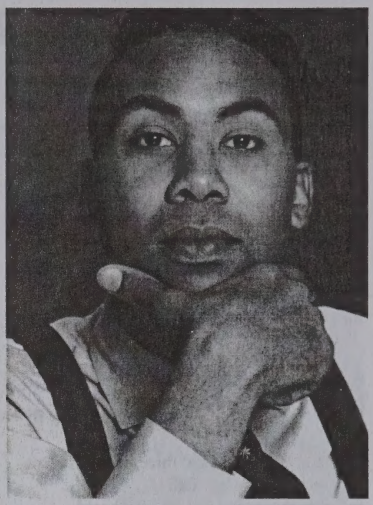
The moment I stepped out on Colorado Boulevard, people were honking, people were taking pictures of me, people were calling me The Rose Queen. People embraced me so much it kept feeding my enthusiasm. And I started crying inside because it was like everybody had come to see me.

So I proceeded all the way down Colorado Boulevard, all the way to Green Street where I finally caught up to the parade, and it was funny, the police were looking at me and all the officials that worked for the Rose Parade were looking at me in that in-no-way-shape-or-form-does-he-belong-here way. And that's the very reason why I did what I did, because in no way shape or form are they for anything that I'm about. I'm black, I'm a male, I'm gay, and I'm a queen.

In 111 years there has only been one black Rose Queen. So I did it. And I want all the little boys and girls to know, whether they're white or black or Japanese or handicap that not only are you a queen but you can be The Rose Queen. Just like me.

photo by Raul Roa

Nahshon Anderson, the 21 year old Pasadena, California native featured last year on the cover of **SBC** and profiled in the story **"To Be Young, Gifted, Black and Homosexual"** , made national news when he donned his gown and crown and leaped onto the Queen's Court float at the first **Tournament of Roses Parade** of the new millennium, where he waved and blew kisses to the crowd before being led off by security.



MOMMY'S PROPERTY DADDY'S BOY

by Edward James Hampton Jr.
ALBANY, CALIFORNIA

There are two sides to every story. The only problem was that I was afraid of being on either side. The conflict would arise the same way every time. The day would start with my father placing me on top of his broad shoulders and showing me off to the world, his world: pool halls, boxing rings, back alleys, barber shops, number rooms, and jitney stations. When asked where we were going, no detailed explanation was required - only two words, "the streets." The streets belonged to men and the streets of the Hill District belonged to black men. Whatever happened here was our business.

The only women invited into these places were the second women. They didn't carry the primary titles of mother, grandmother, aunt, or wife. Many of them were beautiful, intelligent, and always polite to the other fathers' sons and me. But it was very clear that they were waiting for their chance to carry a primary title, to replace our mothers. I found it easy to determine which of the second women were in line for my father. "Don't tell your mother about her" and then he'd give me the look: direct eye contact and a devilish smile while shaking his head in the affirmative. He'd reach his clinched fist turned on its side out to me. I'd clinch mine and tap it on top of his. He'd bring his fist from under and then on top of mine. Tap. The contract was sealed with a "pound." These secrets and others bonded me to my dad as they did countless other sons of The Hill to their dads. These secrets made us men.

As an effeminate boy, it was very important for me to maintain my dad's trust. I wanted to be just like him. I wanted to be a real man. I wanted to be included in the world that belonged to men. I had heard both my father and mother talk about the men who acted like women. Everyone hated them. Even Reverend Winsett, who spoke to God personally, didn't like them. He called them homosexuals and said that they were an abomination before God. I asked my mother what abomination meant. She told me that it meant, "Faggots who try to act like women would burn in hell." I could tell by her delivery of this message that this was one lesson she intended for me to learn well.

I didn't know what I was doing, but for some reason everyday I heard the words, "stop acting like a girl, don't cry, you're not a sissy, be tough, don't act like a little bitch." Once when I was five and playing with paper dolls I had drawn and cut out, my mother threw me into our apartment wall full force and screamed, I will not raise a faggot." A faggot---by now I knew very well what that meant. Why was she being so mean to me? How could she call me one of those people who God didn't like? I had to prove to her that I was a real man like my dad, not a faggot. This is why when I returned home, and my mother asked about the second women, I didn't tell her.

"I know he was out with one of his bitches again." I heard my mother talking to my aunt on the phone. "He thinks he's so damn slick." Oh God, she knows. Somehow she always knows. "Who went to the circus with you and Chipper?" Chipper is what everyone called my father. "No one." Immediately I knew lying to my mother was a mistake. Before the words left my mouth, the phone had dropped from her hands and she was all over me. "Don't stand there and lie to me to protect that no-good nigga. Now I asked you who he was with? He was obviously with someone or there wouldn't be three ticket stubs." I was defeated. I was terrified of my mother, and my five-year-old wit could not come up with an explanation for the extra ticket. "There was no one else." I stood my ground. "Where was my father?" I was thinking, when the first backhand made contact with my face. I felt the tears coming, but I didn't want to cry and be a faggot. I didn't want to break the bond with my dad and tell her about the second woman either. "Don't lie to me! You stupid..." was all I heard before the opposite side of my face was introduced to what my mother proudly called "the old backhand slap." At this point, the tears were flowing, but I was determined not to lose. "Stop crying, where's my belt?" I hated her belt. "No, no, no! I didn't do anything." "Get me my God-damned belt." I was jumping up and down pleading at this point, and any degree of masculinity I tried to portray was gone. I had lost. "He was with..." It was too late. The belt came from every direction: across my head, over my back, and back around to my face. It ended, as always, when she was out of breath. Heaving for air in-between sobs I was left to deal with my own hurt feelings, welted body, and destroyed ego. I knew what I had done. I had betrayed the bond between my father, myself, and all men; and I deserved everything that had just happened to me.

When my father arrived, I couldn't look him in the eyes. I could tell by the way that he dropped his head that he knew I had betrayed him. This fight was especially bad. It seemed to last forever. The place was a wreck, and dad had punched a hole in the wall. I was always amazed at how eventually everything stopped. The screaming, the cursing, the hitting, all seemed to disappear, and everyone just went to sleep. I learned to savor those early morning moments. Even as an adult today, I am happiest in the early morning hours, when everyone else is asleep.

Edward James Hampton Jr.
is the founder and publisher of **Victory! Magazine**, a gay and lesbian business and entreprenurial journal

THREESOME

by Marvin K. White
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

nothing ugly fly

i am black bird two and three winged cessna
beat sound like night falling
call and caw sound like no bird heard
sound like tickle and pain
crushed betweens lid and lash
sound like tears held in breath
sound like rock thrown at god

i am black bird i fly all nite
never tired this way
didnt know north
still dont
felt like counter clock wise circles
was no stopping
no perch might end up somebodys chicken
some greasy ass sandwich some two piece with a bisquit
I am bird not that
cuz i fly all night
soon as sun crash soon as people become they shadows
soon as skies have eyes
i fly i fly i fly
fly to your house
waiting like an uninvited omen
you not there your house empty
you not there hear door lock click
you not there
what bird you think i was
some come here tch tch tic tic tic some come here
eat seed from mouth not a kiss
not a kiss
not a kiss
rest on finger
sit on swing inside your cage inside your window
i bird
ifly
nothing that fly is ugly just wings
just air nothing that fly ugly just small swallowed by sky and god i bird
leave feet
leave hurt
leave leave
leave life leave you imma fly nothing ugly fly
imma go
find up find way up cant find it not from here
not with you cant find my lightness
cant find me
cuz you always tryin to catch me
and i always get caught
in your fist in this lie
so i go up imma bird i fly
i i i i fly

who gonna believe you now

who say
finger in our face
hell is forever
say abomination
who say laying less annointed hands on the backs of our heads
blessed like curse who say on your knees
in the name of...
in the name of...
in the name of...
who say we still yet saved
who say we cant do nothing but sing
who say we got to be silent now
who say
we forget who say
amen over us

my two left feet

when music and you close by I have to shut my eyes to remember
which one of you I'm dancing with and which one of you I'm dancing to

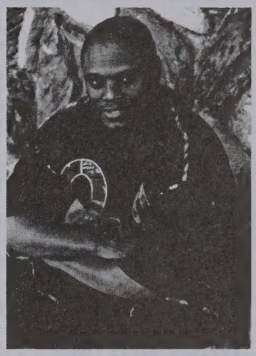
pitch

like blood let
it come up blessed
thick this ritual re-opening
of this same wound
this same ground
you return to you come from

the summer you were beautiful
so who you be now
is the only one i know
only one i love

Marvin K. White is the African American Program Coordinator of the San Francisco-based **STIOPAIDS Project**. His collection of poetry, under the title **Lyric**, is published by **GrapeVine Press**.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE
A Recurring Theme In My Life



by Cleo Manago
INGLEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Who do you think you are?
Loving yourself
Comfortable in your skin
Nonchalant

Who do you think you are? I mean really!
Gracing earth with your existence
Dignified, Africanesque
As if that's the way it's supposed to be

Who in Hell do you think you are?
Shouldn't you be sorry you were ever born?

You're suppose to be
Acting out
Demoralized
Submissive, Beat Down
Destroyed
Hurting others who remind you too much of yourself

You're suppose to be
Unfulfilled
Unsuccessful
Unemployed
Unimportant

Don't you know this?

I can't take it anymore
Just who do you think you are?
I mean, don't you realize you're [just] Black
A Black man?

Everyone notices when you walk in
They wonder if you're important
They think you must be somebody!
You confuse them
You confuse me!

They observe your darkness as you shine

But, I refuse to be impressed
Like me, you're just a Black person

A Black man

Just like the homeless guys in the streets
Like the pimps (so I've heard)
Like the rapers
Like the rappers
Like the muggers
Like the gang-bangers
Like O.J. Simpson
Like my Father

Still, you walk around as if you're worthy of all you survey

I wanna know now!

Who - - do you think you are?

You're suppose to linger painfully on the fringes of my mind
You're suppose to verify my self-doubt by your actions
My self-hate with your words

You're suppose to give-in to my need to think, "Well at least I'm better than him"

But you won't do it!
You're pissing me off!

Who do you think you are?

Don't walk like that! - Don't talk like that!

What are you up to anyway?

Okay, All right, OKAY! I'm sorry for hurting you

Thank you for loving yourself, for loving me

I needed to know of this
One day soon I too will arrive

Cleo Manago is the founder of the **Black Men's Xchange** and the Executive Director of **The AMASSI Center** in Inglewood, California. In 1995 Manago was the first openly same gender-loving man to address **The Nation of Islam** at their Los Angeles Temple, and in 1997 Manago made history again by convening both hetro- and homosexual members of the black community for an open forum and debate titled **Homosexuality in the Black Community**.

WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HARVEST

by G. B. Mann
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

"We are each other's harvest."
--- Nikki Giovanni

Upon first reading those words as a teen, I was intrigued. It became a riddle like the many things that I, as a child, was privileged enough to hear grown folks say when I was within earshot, things I somehow knew that I should remember because of the deeper meaning I felt was in them. Years later it would dawn on me. "Oh, *that's* what they meant by that!!!"

Nikki's poetic stanza stayed with me like the admonitions of "Mama," my grandmother. My mother's mother. Her wisdom was elegant, unadorned. In the summer, she would holler at my siblings and I for standing in the 'ice box' door. She scolded in her Louisiana creole accent, "Ain't nothin gonna jump outta dere at yew." She knew well that we liked the feeling of cool on our faces, a cool that, for a moment, gave our nostrils and eyeballs an icy reprieve from the sweltering California heat waves. Her deceptively simple words were loaded with meaning, an accelerated course in getting what you want---from life. She'd follow with, "You gon hafta reach in dere and git whut you wont." We stood staring into the frig, tempting fate, knowing what was next. "Close my [damn] Frigidaire (even though it was a Norge). You lettin out the cold." Besides the obvious meaning of her words, she was also saying that energy is valuable, and to waste it is costly. But I stray, slightly.

Nikki's "human harvest" clung to my psyche. And, years later, I was rewarded with an epiphany. If there be any such force as Mother Nature, then we humans be the fruit of her womb. Like fruit, and most living things, we begin as a seed. We ripen. We wither. We return to mother Earth.

The question then becomes what do we do between our ripening and withering is what key. That in-between period has been called many things. Spiritualist Iyanla Vanzant refers to it as "the meantime," a phrase which suggests that we are not truly living during this period, when in fact *every* moment is full of meaning and contains a joy just awaiting our recognition to experience it fully. Or, perhaps she suggests that life is a *kindergarten* before the *real thing,* and that death is our entrance into it. In the 1950s musical, JAMAICA, Lean Horne sings the Harbug and Arlen lyrics:

"Life is short, short brother (ain't it the truth). And there is no other (ain't it the truth)... You got to get yo possum (ain't it the truth) while you're still in blossom (ain't it the truth)... Cause when you're laid horizontal in that telephone booth, there'll be no breathin spells... It's only natu-rel, ain't it the gospel truth..."

I have often said to friends who believe in reincarnation and heaven, that if that state/place does exist -- great -- it's a bonus. I'll take that too, but I ain't bankin on it. Gimme mine on earth. Bob Marley sings:

"If you know what life is worth, you would get yours on earth."

The knowledge that we will one day be dust can heighten the experience of our every waking moment. As so many sages have said "the power is in the present moment." *Seize the moment,* and the day must yield to your will. But how do we seize the moment? How do we not get ahead of our selves and damn where we find our selves right now? We must locate and become aware of our *own* center, our *source.* Some locate this source outside of themselves, surrendering it to a 'higher power,' when in fact we are at one with the higher power, it is *within* us. It waits only for our acknowledgment to animate it. We are a part of it. We are it. Which brings us to *'it.'* That intangible, ever out of reach, "it."

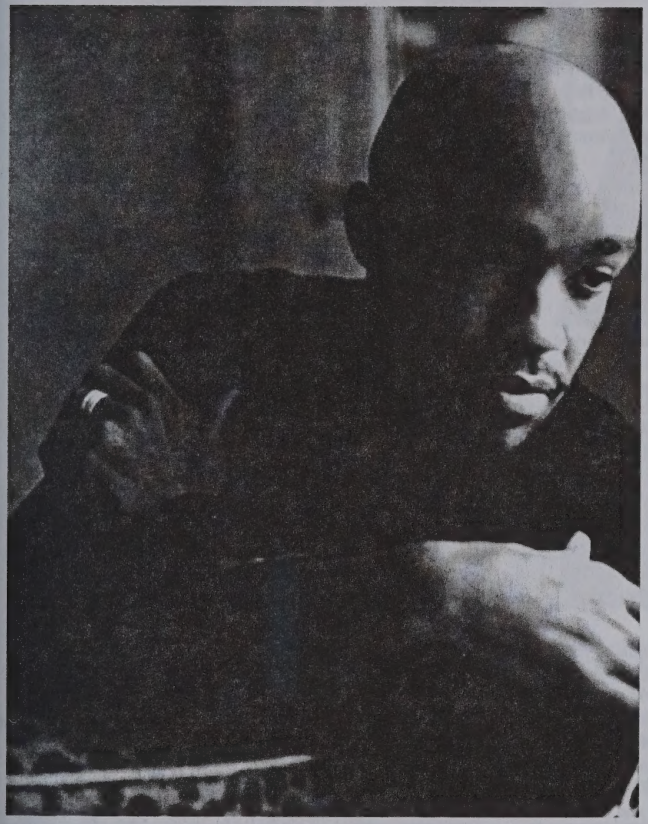
'It' is that commodity, that state of being and perfection for which we all strive, knowingly or not. This is well understood by capitalist advertisers who profit from our yearning and striving for 'it.' If we examine and ponder its messages without reacting to them, they can be effective tools in navigating us to our higher ground.

A Blue Cross Blue Shield ad shows a gorgeous, sweater-clad black man sitting on a worn sofa. He smiles and says (something like): "I've lived in this body for twenty-five years. That makes me the landlord." What a powerful statement! But again, I stray, slightly.

Advertising says "Coke is **it.**" "Just do **it**." "**It's** the real thing." So, what is "it?" It is a force, a power that resides in each of us. Call it God. Call it The Universe. Call it Jesus, Allah or Yaweh, but call it.

That human harvest epiphany also became *flesh* in the form of my first book *--Low-Hanging Fruit.* The fruit refers, in part, to dick and ass, but it also refers to the total human being, a totality which includes the spirit force.

We can share this force, this 'it,' with each other in many ways. One of the simplest, most inti-



"In these times of media-informed living, one of the most courageous acts one can perform is to taste another's tongue. To insert oneself into another. To accept another into one's body. To dare to risk the taint of passion and lust in our lives. Life is balance, and lust, in moderation, is an ingredient in healthy living."

mate and complete ways for us to summon it, is through the sharing of our bodies in sex and affection. Love-making. Fucking. Whatever you chose to call it. It is an engagement that has lately been heaped with much shame and guilt. Politicians, experts, and nosy-motherfuckers are in our bedrooms (where they have always wanted to be), monitoring, regulating and cock-blocking.

In these times of media-informed living, one of the most courageous acts one can perform is to taste another's tongue. To insert oneself into another. To accept another into one's body. To dare to risk the taint of passion and lust in our lives.

Life is balance, and lust, in moderation, is an ingredient in healthy living. That is not to suggest that we act on every sexual impulse that comes, but that a measure of lust is healthy. Many times sex is a longing for union and affirmation.

Sex is one of the closest roads to *becoming one* that we humans have. Along with that physical merge comes a spiritual connection. Ever tried the Vulcan Mind Transfer patented by Dr. Spock? Popular spiritual thought says that the highest human experience is a personal pursuit and solo act. This philosophy sublimates our carnal desires. We are also animal. Good sex is also a ritual path to spirituality and provides a visceral experience of the human harvest.

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Humankind was once 'hunters and gatherers.' Our occupations today are not so different from our origins. Harvesting (gathering) is an action. Which means that we have some say in what is in our "baskets." What has our gather yielded? What will we do with this crop? What does it consist of? Friends? Family? Lovers? Is our harvest providing for our best health and well-being? Are there some greens, yellows, some oranges, reds, some leafy and some roots? Let's involve our sense, our sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste, hearts, minds and souls in appreciation and celebration of the bounty that we be.

We are each other's harvest. It is nigh time that we treat one another as the *fruit* that we are. Mother Nature insists.

GB Mann is the author of **Low-Hanging Fruit**, a collection of erotic, literature-quality short stories for black, same gender-loving men. He is also a playwright and a frequent contributor to several black lesbian and gay publications, including **SBC**.

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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11]

Conference Level. The official weekend activities at the host hotel will kick off with an evening of cultural performances on Thursday June 29, followed by the Opening Reception and Kickoff Party on Friday June 30, continuing on Saturday July 1 with seminars on topics ranging from spirituality, sexuality, personal finance, health/wellness, a media reception, relationships and politics for men, women and youth. The committee on that Saturday evening, July 1 will host the Youth Dance. One of the highlights of the weekend will be the Independence 2000 Festival on Lake Michigan (Waveland Clock Tower at Irving Park Road. & North Lake Shore Drive) on Sunday July 2 with merchandise and food vendors, entertainment, recreation, music and dancing for all. All official committee hosted events are free of charge.

Chicago will also host The Taste of Chicago and a major fireworks extravaganza (Monday July 3) during this weekend. Over 10,000 brothas and sistas are expected.

For more information about planning committee activities and membership, sponsorship opportunities, vending opportunities and volunteer participation please call 773.731.8665 or e-mail them at chicagoblackpride@yahoo.com.

ADULT STAR GETS COLLEGE DEGREE

Los Angeles, California---In an industry where most people assume that wages are spent on the wages of "sin," one adult film star used his paychecks to purchase a college education. After 25 years and attendance at four different universities, 10 different colleges and numerous trade schools, Andre Bolla has been awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Bolla, 42, has been an adult model and actor for almost 15 years, appearing in dozens of magazines and over 80 films. He has also appeared in 42 mainstream motion pictures and television programs.

The Seattle native worked through the '70s at various radio stations both in front of and behind the microphone, eventually making his way to Los Angeles as a member of the Air Force. When his tours was up, he took a job as a welder installing and repairing railroad tracks. His first adult film came shortly thereafter in 1985. Most recently, Andre shot several adul-films on location in Shinjuku, Japan.

SODOMY LAW CHALLENGED IN VIRGINIA

Roanoke, Virginia---Another opportunity to chip away at the nation's remaining state sodomy laws is taking shape. The Virginia Court of Appeals agreed to look at the constitutionality of the state's law that forbids oral sex between consenting adults. The law, carrying penalies of 5-20 years imprisonment, applies to both opposite- and same-sex partners. The case before the court concerns nine men convicted for soliciting sodomy while talking to undercover police officers in Roanoke's Wasena Park.

Although all 50 states had some form of sodomy laws as recently as the 1960s, today, only 16 do. Besides Virginia, 11 others states (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Utah) have various sodomy laws on the books that cover both heterosexual and homosexual sodomy. Four states (Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas) have laws that pertain only to same-sex sodomy. Currently, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund is pursuing challenges against these laws in Arkansas and Texas.

Suzanne B. Goldberg, a Lambda staff attorney, said, "The government should not be in the business of policing the private behavior of consenting adults." She also stated that while some states do not often enforce their sodomy laws, just the law being in existence has been used to deny custody of children to lesbian and gay parents, put people at risk to lose professional licenses and deny employment. Lambda Staff Attorney Steve Scarborough said, "The willingness of the Virginia court to review the constitutionality of this law is very encouraging." For more information contact Peg Byron, Lambda Legal's director of public education, at 212-809-8585, ext. 230.

CITYSTUFF.COM A BITE OF THE APPLE

New York, New York---If you've ever been to New York and have wanted to capture some of that New York excitement and style and have it sent to you, check out Citystuff.com.

Citystuff.com specialists scour New York and other cities for unique merchandise from small, up and coming fashion designers, accessories providers and food merchants. They've narrowed your search for a distinctive gift to include items that are fun, affordable and different.

Citystuff.com launched September 1 and has already been recognized by In Style Magazine, Fortune, Your Company and Time Out New York for offering a "well-chosen" collection with items in all price ranges. Designer shirts, pants, dresses, sweatshirts and a range of New York souvenirs are all attracting attention. Only-in-New-York items such as bagels, Junior's famous flavored cheesecakes and delicious New York pizza - made on Broadway and frozen and shipped - satisfy that New York craving that we all get from time to time.

Citystuff.com plans to offer a range of products from San Francisco next, with Los Angeles and Philadelphia to be launched early next year. Of course new New York items are added to the site every week, making it worth your while to stop by regularly.

Gay Friendly Citystuff.com founders Ed Vincent and Patrick Tully are seeing a lot of their shoppers come from gay websites, including Homosexual.com, which has a link to Citystuff.com. They contacted a gay marketing agency, The Poux Company, and together created a marketing program to the gay community to capitalize on this interest. "Gay men and women are often the first people to spot trends, especially in fashion, and so attracting the gay community to our site makes perfect sense for us," says Vincent.

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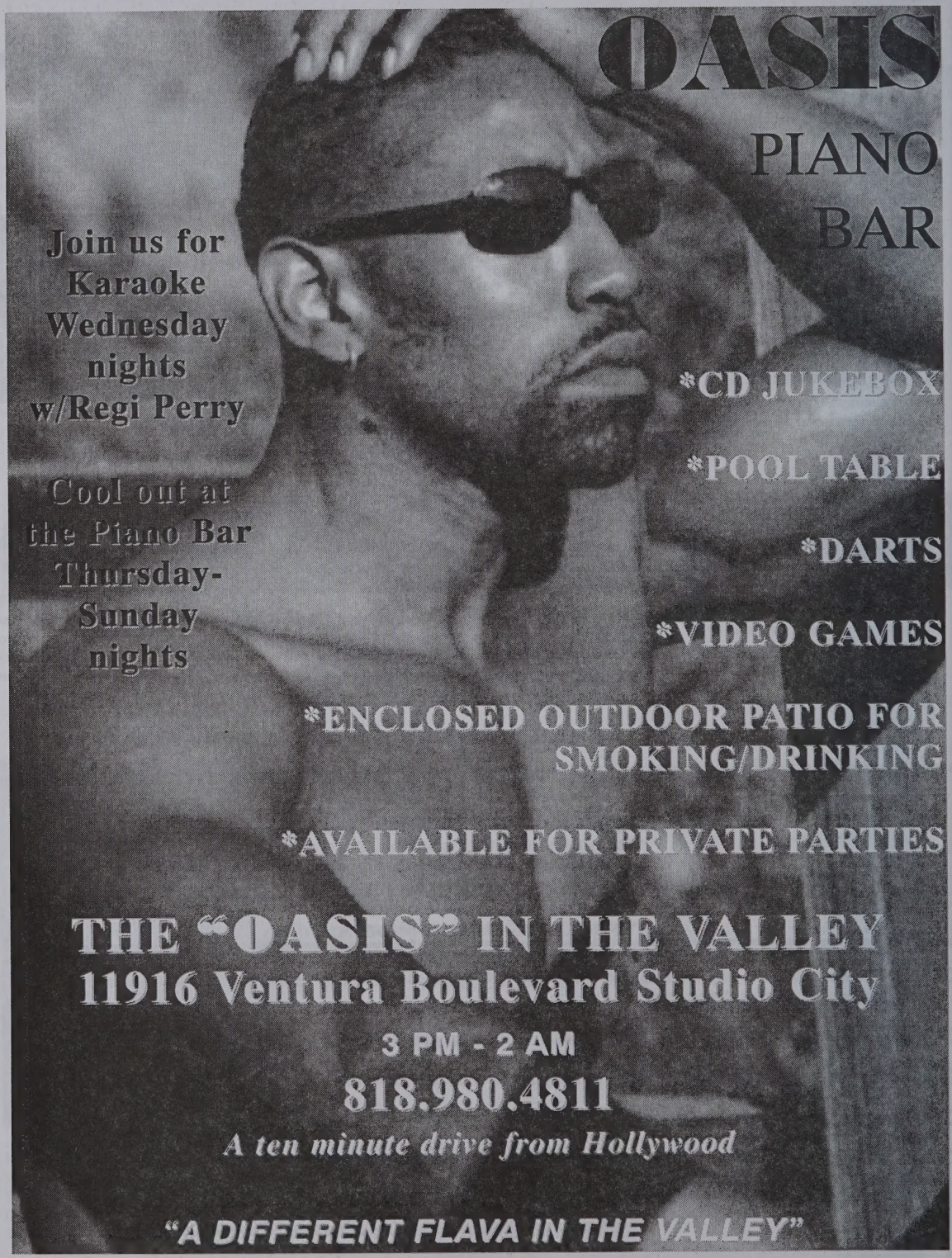
- "I do not think there is any other quality so essential to success of anyking as the quality of perserverence. It overcomes almost everything, even nature."
- "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."
- "Success seeems to be largely a matter of hanging on after others have let go."
- "All great achievements require time."
- "At a certain point in every struggle of great importance, a moment of doubt or hesitation develops. If there is one lesson experience has taught us... It is that when you have found by the help of God a correct course, a morally sound objective, you do not equivocate, you do not retreat you struggle until you get a victory.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music reviews by Erik Aston

D'ANGELO
Voodoo
(Virgin Records)

If you have only seen his steamy nude video that BET has been airing continuously, then you know damn well that D'Angelo is back (and, baby, he got back). This is not just a simple return to his music. He's back with a well oiled new muscular toned, hard bod. He's sensual, sexual and with a yearning that comes from his heart, his head, and his loins; standing naked from the hips up with just enough showing to make you walk closer to your screen (as if that would work). This has to be one of most anticipated collection in recent years. D'Angelo at long last has returned with his sophomore effort sounding more soulful than a young erotic Prince in his purple jock strap years.

In this highly anticipated follow up to his 1995 double-platinum debut, "Brown Sugar", D'Angelo resurfaces from a 5-year absence. Though pressured by the industry and by his legion of fans to rush back into the recording studio, D'Angelo stays true to his own vision and musical influences and thus far has not been tempted by the money or fame. That alone makes him an original with few peers.

This album is in classic old-school soul with funk-fueled party music such as "Devil's Pie" and the current single "Untitled (How Does It Feel"). The music is original and yet still true to the best of R&B.

"Untitled" is written by D'Angelo along with former Tony Toni Tone' lead singer Raphael Saadiq. The two have created a soulful and sexual song that can lead to a long night of lovemaking. "Feel Like Making Love", an emotional remake of Roberta Flack's all time classic is the most sensual and sexual song on the album. In a stirring duet with Grammy winner Lauren Hill, D'Angelo is at his best. Their voices fuse perfectly and often become one. This sensual pairing reminds this critic of the late Donny Hathaway and Ms. Flack. The Hill and D'Angelo coupling is worth the price of the CD alone. Interestingly and with brilliant results D'Angelo dares to enter the red hot Latin music craze with his self-penned "Spanish Joint". It groves with that must move/dance urge that only good music can do for you. My brothas.... my sistas... the drought is over. D'Angelo is home.

photo by Thierry LeGoues

photo by Herb Ritts

TINA TURNER
Twenty Four Seven
(Virgin Records)

The hardest working legs in show business are back. In celebration of her sixtieth (!) birthday, Tina Turner has released "Twenty Four Seven". These dynamic new cuts have propelled the lady full force into the new millennium. Since the turbulent 60's La Turner has been setting stages and concert halls aflame with her full and familiar throttle. Her electric wire performances have inspired many a singer---just ask Mick Jagger and The Rolling Stones, Jennifer Lopez, Brittany Spears---and her sizzling sexual presence has been the fodder of tabloids, films and books for decades. And now in the year 2000, she has not only increased her power as an artist but has maintained her musical edge.

Edge?..you question. Since girlhood Tina has always moaned gospel hymns in a full and earnest vigor. As a young woman, and partnered with ex-husband Ike and those low down Ikettes, she reinvented rhythm and blues into her own personal sexual wailing. And as a solo performer Turner miraculously transformed herself before our eyes into a rock icon. While lesser and better-voiced singers faded into obscurity or even worse...clung desperately to their past (somebody say Diana Ross and Mary Wilson). With the single exception of Cher, there are no other singers of her genre who have endured and triumph over the ever-changing musical tides and times.

Once again Turner has taken us on her personal musical journey. She sings each song as if it were a deeply claimed memory. Leaving no doubt that many of the songs were written exclusively for her. Teaming with some of the sharpest, most cutting-edge writers and producers in contemporary pop, rock and soul, Tina excels in the throbbing "When The Heartache Is Over", her current single. Joining in this collaboration are award winning producers Brian Rawling and Mark Taylor, the Metro team behind Cher's multimillion success "Believe." 'Heartache' could very well be Turner's next big hit.

"Absolutely Nothing's Changed" and "Talk To My Heart" are two outstanding production numbers that highlights Tina's vulnerability when it comes to love. Once again rocker Bryan Adams joins Tina in a rolling "Without You". Tina and her team also turned to the Bee Gees (say what?) for "I Will Be There." Turner makes every song sound important.

This CD was conceived and nurtured after Tina's dazzling performance at VH-1's Divas show last year. With her writers and producers firmly ensconced in foggy Londontown, Miss Tina (I like saying that) traveled from her home in Switzerland to record her vocals.

In a deliberate change of pace "Falling" is a simple, sad and haunting ballad; a true Tina moment used well.

Throughout this jammed packed collection of pop/rock music, synthesizers rein supreme in slick and sleek production values. The title track "Twenty Four Seven", is destined to become one of her all time standards. Though not quite on par with 'Private Dancer' this album should stand alone on it's own musical merits. "Twenty Four Seven" the CD stands in testimony to all that Tina Turner has become. It is an anthem to her ever-growing persona as, not only an artist and an icon, but quite simply a goddess.

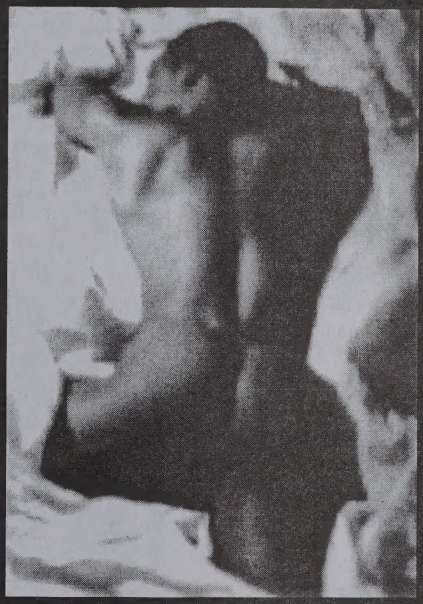
He had lived all his young life nestled in the easiness of L.A. He was a pretty young black thing with few friends but many acquaintances. His sinful good looks, gentle manner and lip smacking physique kept firm and lean at some unknown gym and blessed darker than his natural cocoa blackness by long visits to nude beaches made him the object of sexual admiration and hallowed envy by those who proudly---and with deep innuendo---claimed to know him best.

But he maintained an inoffensive distance, and it was this aloof, free of petty
narcissism, that kept desire for him kindled in the flaming hearts and stained
panties of so many.

Yet he was easy, easy as the city of his birth, easy as the Malibu coves where he so often stretched his naked body, black as rich mahogany, pure as a naked Christ, on top of beige sand ---easy.
His own best company.

Probably.

He could spend all day in the house alone if he wanted to, looking out over the city, soaking in a tub, oiled up for masturbation in front of the mirror.



The king of cool out.

He probably didn't need the real world---he had imagination---as much as the real world needed him.

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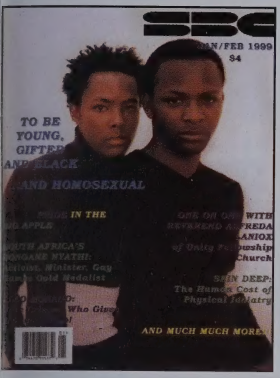

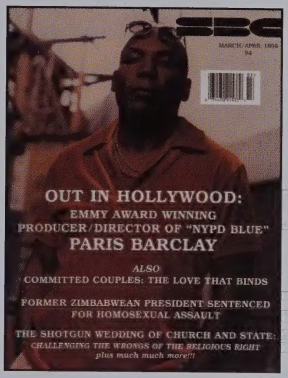
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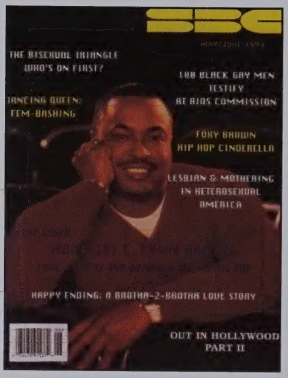

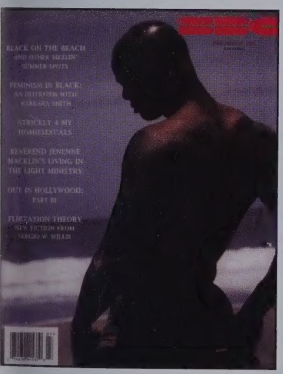
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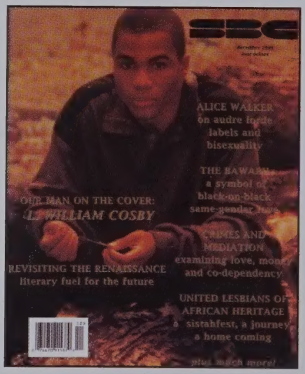

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